SAVIOURS OF ISLAMIC SPIRIT

VOLUME 1

By

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Translated by
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I have the greatest pleasure in acknowledging my gratitude to Mr. Abrar Aḥmad Khan who took the trouble of going through the manuscript and giving some very helpful suggestions. Likewise, I have greatly benefited from the labour put in by Mr. Muhammad Ghayas Uddin in checking the original references which was really a difficult and tiresome job. My thanks are also due to Mr. S. Maqbool Ahmad, Mr. Wali Ullah and a few other friends who ungrudgingly extended their help in the preparation of the manuscript, printing, etc.

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October, 1971.

MOHIUDDIN AHMAD

TRANSLITERATION

The dashes to mark the long vowels. ā as in 'far', ū as in 'loose'; ī as in 'mean' have been retained, leaving other conventional signs Two more signs, ʿ and ʾ representing the Arabic *ain* and *hamza* have also been retained The sounds of ḳ and dj used in the Encyclopædia of Islam have been replaced by q and j respectively, which are now in common use Where the two consonants—*ch*, *dh*, *gh*, *kh*, *sh*, and *th*—have been used, these are to be sounded together, as, for example, *ch* in 'church', *sh* in 'ship' and *th* in 'think'. The sound of *gh* resembles *gz* as in 'exact', that of *kh* is like *ch* in Scottish *loch* or the German *ach* and *dh* gives the sound *th* in 'father' Wherever the two consonants are desired to give their own sounds separately, an apostrophe has been inserted in between as, for example, in *Ad'ham*, *Is'haq*, etc.

However, where any Arabic word is in common use in English (as, Cadi) or its pronunciation is known to the English-speaking people (as, Ghazali) no signs have been used

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PREFACE

A study circle formed under the name of "Jamā'at-i-Da'wat-o-Tablīgh" organised a series of lectures at Lucknow in Muharram, 1372 A H., on certain important topics for the benefit of its members and others interested in academic and cultural advancement. The subject allotted to me for the discourse was "the History of Religious Preaching and the Revivalist Movement." The disquisition continued throughout the week I had then jotted down some points as an aide-memoire for delivering these lectures but some of the listeners took down notes which were later on shown to me for publication of the discourse. I then realised that the subject required a detailed treatment as no exhaustive and complete dissertation on this important topic of Islamic history existed It represented a serious gap in the Islamic literature which had to be filled in. The absence of any work on this subject has produced a misconceived notion even amongst the enlightened circles that the attempts for renovation and renaissance of the Muslim peoples were made from time to time but no continuous attempt at rejuvenating the *Millat* could be looked for in the annals of Islamic history. It is commonly held that Islam did produce towering personalities who possessed a rocking capacity to struggle against the order of the day but barring a few luminaries who were born after centuries, the reformers, leaders, and the *'ulema* produced by Islam in the past were of no higher calibre than those born during its age of decadence, and they had hardly any intellectual or academic contribution to their credit It is erroneously thought that only seven or eight outstanding personages could be claimed as an exception to the barren and unproductive era of Islamic intellectual history.

The ignorance in this regard may not appear to be striking but it has nevertheless its far-reaching consequences This concept produces a sense of despondency and a sickening atmosphere.

It dashes all hopes in the innate vitality of Islam which has always produced men of redoubtable courage and conviction as cannot be found amongst any other people There is thus absolutely no ground for any pessimism and despondency in Islam on this score.

The inference drawn by certain people in this regard is, however, not without a cause Unfortunately we find either a glossary of events with Kings and Emperors as the central figures or biographical accounts of certain eminent luminaries in the vast treasure of Islamic literature but no account of the revivalist movement or intellectual history of the Muslim peoples encompassing the academic and speculative achievements of all those savants who have left an indelible mark on the world of Islam These scholars have relentlessly fought against the forces of corruption, defended the Islamic precepts and teachings and rejuvenated the spirit of Islamic revival besides making valuable contributions to the intellectual and academic treasure of their people In fact there is no gap at all in the intellectual history of Islam, it is only in the presentation of the history of its peoples, which needs urgently to be filled in A history of religious revival and preaching in Islam would also be an account of the intellectual and academic movements which have seen successive ebbs and flows of Islamic reawakening in the past

However, when the task was taken up, it was realised that an article or a small treatise will not do justice to the subject It would be necessary to wade through the entire historical literature along with the available works on biography, arts and sciences, translations, etc, and re-evaluate and compile the available material in a particular manner The leisure required for undertaking a task of this magnitude has never been available to the author, but as the crying need for such a volume impelled me take up the work, it was not possible for me to write these pages without going through all the available source material

It might be made clear that my purpose is neither to explain what is meant by revival nor to name the few outstanding personalities who are commonly known as revivalists (*mujaddids*) but to

present an account of the continuous effort made during the past thirteen hundred years for stimulating a spirit of reawakening among the Muslims, and bring into light those eminent savants who rose to the defence of Islam in order to arrest the onslaught of the evil forces, gave birth to various movements for upholding the Islamic morals and values and, finally, whose efforts made it possible for Islam to survive to this day. I would mention several persons in this treatise who cannot be called as *mujaddids* but who had worked for the renovation and regeneration of Islamic faith and practice and the subsequent generations of Muslims have ever remained indebted to them.

In writing these volumes the following points have been kept in view :

(1) For presenting the view-point of any particular person or a movement started by him, his own writings or sayings have been relied upon. If these have been found inadequate, only then help has been taken from the writings or descriptions left by his friends, contemporaries and pupils. In the latter case more reliable and authentic sources have been given preference without placing undue reliance on those writers who were nearer to him in time ; trustworthy material has been used wherever it could be found, after careful verification of the facts

(2) In portraying the biographical sketches and character of the personalities mentioned, light has been shed on the intellectual, cultural and academic temperament of the time in order to make a correct assessment of the achievement of the personage concerned in its true perspective. It is necessary to cast a glance on the then prevailing situation before a place could be assigned to any individual in history. Assessment of any character, out of its own context of time and place, according to modern concepts and values might appear to be a work of critical study, but there can hardly be anything more unjust to the personality so evaluated. The success or

failure of any individual can only be judged in the background of the conditions in which he has had an opportunity to strive for a cause, otherwise, the greatest and most eminent person can be depicted as a complete failure in the light of changed circumstances and according to the likes and dislikes of later historians. In fact, no historical figure, Islamic or otherwise, can claim a lasting recognition if it is viewed from a wrong angle.

(3) Presentation of a few short and sketchy extracts from the writings of any author or thinker hardly does any justice to him for the thought, message and call of the author cannot be presented in a few isolated passages, nor the reader can feel any intimacy with the author by going through small passages A bit lengthy extracts from the writings of important writers, reformers and thinkers have, therefore, been given so that the reader may himself be in a position to feel the impact of their message and make his own estimation of the personality he has been introduced. The writer of these pages has himself spent considerable time in going through the writings of these masters to feel the touch of the tenor and spirit of their call The reader can easily discern from these pages the attitude of the author towards these beacons of moral and spiritual guidance and for this I need not apologise to those who would want me to be dryly objective.

(4) I have not simply given extracts from the works of these masters but also tried to shed light on the priceless qualities of their head and heart, their endeavours to cultivate a living, all-pervading consciousness of the Almighty and, also, their moral excellence. The combination of consummate academic attainments with a burning desire to propitiate God and to earn His pleasure are the mark and symbol of these teachers of the old The readers of these pages can rightly claim

to be allowed to partake in the efflorescence of spirit and heart instead of simply gaining acquaintance with these men of letters

(5) The biographical sketches of historic personalities drawn out in these pages are not limited to a presentation of their achievements alone. Wherever their contemporaries or subsequent writers have criticised the ideas or writings of these persons, or an answer to such criticisms has been given, these have also been brought out but detractory and intemperate verdicts have not been included just to make this work appear more critical.

This is the first volume of this series Originally I had an idea of describing the achievements of Ibn Taymiyah also in this volume and thus wanted to finish it with an account of the first eight centuries after the *Hijrah*. However, Ibn Taymiyah and his attainments were found to be so epoch-making that an exhaustive study of his times and work had to accommodated in the second part of this work. The third and most probably the fourth part of the book would be devoted to the teachers of India who have been the fountainhead of call to religion and renovation of Islamic thought in the immediate past.

Lastly, the author has no hesitation in acknowledging the fact that the leisure, peace of mind and the wide study required for undertaking a stupendous task of this magnitude has not been available to him. Nevertheless, whatever was possible for him to do, is before the readers, and this too could not have been accomplished without the help and guidance from God Almighty.

"*There is no help save from Allah alone*".

Rae Bareli:
4th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 1374 A. H.

ABUL HASAN ʿALI
Daira Hazrat Shah ʿAlamullah

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

PROLOGUE

The Necessity of Reformation and Renovation and its continuity in Islamic History

Life is Ever Changing :

Islam is the last message of God Almighty; it has been presented in a complete form before the world, which has been told that:

> *"This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion AL-ISLAM".*
>
> (*Al-Mā'ida:3*)

On the one hand God has been well-pleased to favour mankind with a perfect and final religion; on the other, the fact is that life is on the move, ever-changing and evolving as someone has aptly said:

Life is ever youthful,
Continuously on the move, zestful.

The religion bestowed by Omniscient God is grounded in a faith in eternal values and transcendental facts, yet, it is also zestful, perpetually moving and sufficing for the transformations of life. God has endowed His religion with the capacity to turn over a new leaf with the changes ringing the world and thus provide human beings with an uninterrupted guidance in every

phase of their life It can help humanity to find its way at every turn and pass. It is not a culture of any particular age or the architecture of a particular place preserved in the shape of archaeological remains, but a living faith, a masterpiece of ingenuity and craftsmanship of the omniscient and Wise Creater·

That is the measuring of the Mighty, the Wise.

(*Ya Sin 38*)

the doing of Allah Who perfecteth all things Lo ! He is Informed of what ye do

(*An Namal 88*)

Islamic Age—The Most Fast Changing Era :

In its being given as the last and universal religion, the *Ummah* of Islam had of necessity to be the last, widespread and universal brotherhood so that it may confront all the nations of the world at one time or the other and struggle against such odds as no other people have had to face It was, therefore, in the fitness of things that the time allocated to this *Ummah* should be so fast-moving and ever-changing as the world has not witnessed in its past history

Divine Arrangements for the Existence of Islam :

In order to enable the followers of Islam to meet the time-bound and extremely variable human needs changing according to circumstances, God has bestowed two things upon this *Ummah* First, the precepts and teachings of the Holy Prophet of Islam, Mohammad (may the peace of God be upon him), which can withstand all changes brought about by time and space, and solve all problems posed by the time-bound needs of humanity Secondly, the Lord has taken it upon Himself, and, indeed, history bears a testimony to the fact, that He shall always be raising such beacons of light and learning who will be translating the teachings and precepts of Islam into practical life and thus infusing a new life-blood into the veins of the *Ummah* for its march onwards This religion has been endowed with a peculiar capacity and vitality to produce such men of incomparably high character and

behaviour, as are not to be found in other nations. This is not merely fortuitous, but, in truth and reality, a fulfilment of the preordained arrangement made by God Almighty; for, the *Ummah* always did get a man of the same type and stature that it needed in a particular age

Attacks on Islam:

From the very inception of its career on this planet, Islam had been singled out for such fatal attacks as no other religion would have been able to withstand. There have been religions which had once conquered the then known world but they could not survive under an offensive much less serious than that Islam had to face Unlike others, Islam not only overcame all its adversaries but was also successful in maintaining its original form and purity. If, on the one hand, Assassins posed a grave internal danger for the faith and spirit of Islam, the onslaught of the Crusaders and the invasion of the Mongols, on the other, were sufficient to efface it completely. Had there been any other religion placed in such an inviable position as Islam, it would certainly have lost its soul and today we would have had to look for it in the pages of history. Islam, however, not only survived in the face of all these internal and external threats to its very existence, but was also able to gain victories in entirely new fields. Islam was continuously called upon to resist the onslaught of innovations, deviations and misguided interpretations of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, foreign traditions, heretical rites of the worship of saints, relics and tombs, speculative thought, materialism, epicureanism and godlessness, and, indeed, it sometimes appeared as if Islam would not be able to weather the storm, but the conscience of its followers always refused to strike a compromise with the evil, and Islam emerged triumphantly on each occasion. In every age, it produced a man of God who attacked these innovations and deviations with the full weight of unshakable conviction and restored the true spirit of the faith; reaffirmed the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet against the heretical rites, customs and foreign influences, propounded the teachings of Islam to

contradict speculative thought and materialistic precepts, raised the banner of revolt in the face of despots and emperors; condemned opulence, luxury and indolence of the rich and enunciated the teachings of Islam as the sole valid source of religious, moral and political advancement. They provided a new driving force, a new life to the Muslims of their time These scholars of impeccable worth and ability possessed the priceless gift of intellectual, moral and religious capabilities and were beacons of light for their contemporaries Each one of these was capable enough to expose the manifestations of the *Ignorance* of his age and to bring into light the correct and unalloyed teachings of Islam before the people. This is a clear evidence of the fact that God Almighty has decided to keep this religion alive so that it may ultimately provide guidance to the wayworn humanity. The fact of the matter is that God has ordained that the task entrusted earlier to the prophets and apostles will have to be accomplished by the followers of the last Prophet

Absence of Revivalists in other Faiths:

We find extremely few persons who have revived and renovated other religions The absence of such teachers for hundreds or rather thousands of years in other religions is striking enough. There has hardly been any renovator who could pull down the innovations and deviations which had found their way into other religions, restore the original purity, give a call to shed the accretions, decry the foreign elements, rites and customs, wage a war against the inroads of materialistic and pleasure-seeking ideas and enlighten the hearts of his co-religionists by his faith, true spiritualism and a personal example of ennobling sacrifice for his cause

Christianity can particularly be cited as a case in point It deviated from its path in the middle of its first century and deteriorated from a monotheistic faith to a polytheistic cult—such an early retrogression is not to be found elsewhere It became an admixture of the Greek and Buddhist religious thoughts, and, what is noteworthy, this happened through the hands of its greatest mentor and teacher, St Paul (10—65 A D). The transformation

was really from one world to another, changing its shape and content to such an extent that only the name and a few rites of the former could survive in the new religion. Ernest De Bunsen describes the mutilation undergone by Christianity in these words :

> "The doctrinal system recorded in the new Testament is not that which Jesus Christ has solemnly preached by word and deed. Not in Jesus, but in Paul, the Jewish and Christian dissenter, with his hidden wisdom, with his figurative interpretation of the Scriptures as being full of types and prophecies of future things, lies the principal reason for the existing dissension between Christians on the one side, and Jews and Mahomedans on the other. Following Stephen, the promulgator and developer of Essenic doctrines, Paul has brought the author of Christianity in connection with Buddhist tradition. Paul has laid the foundation to that amalgamation of antagonistic traditions which can be traced in the New Testament-Scriptures, and which has presented to the World an essentially non-historical image of Christ. Not Jesus, but Paul and the later gnostics have framed the principal doctrines which during eighteen centuries have been recognised as the foundation of orthodox Christianity[1]."

During all these years, and even today, Christendom has been treading the path shown by St Paul It could not produce a man who would have revolted against the antagonistic traditions which were made a part and parcel of Christianity by St. Paul. No body tried for centuries to bring back the religion of Jesus Christ to the point where the exalted teacher and his disciples had left it At last Martin Luther (1488—1546) raised the banner of Reformation in Germany in the sixteenth century, but even his effort was limited to certain specific issues; the movement did not aim at bringing back the Christendom to the teachings of Jesus Christ nor did it represent a revolt against the wrong direction

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1 De Bunsen : p 128

that Christianity had been forced to adopt Thus Christianity could not produce any revolutionary, and, at the same time, a successful movement for its reformation for about fifteen centuries Christian scholars too admit the fact that no mentor or movement could manage to accomplish a reformation of Christianity during the first fifteen hundred years of its career

J. B Mullinger writes in his article on "Reformation" in Encyclopaedia Britannica·

> "If, however, we endeavour to assign the causes which prevented the Reformation from being carried even to but partial success long prior to the 16th century, we can have no difficulty in deciding that foremost among them must be placed the manner in which the medieval mind was fettered by a servile regard for precedant. To the men of the Middle ages, whether educated or uneducated, no measure of reform seemed defensible which appeared in the light of innovation" [1]

The same writer continues at another place in the same article

> "The complete failure of these successive efforts to bring about any comprehensive measure of church reform is a familiar fact in European history" [2]

And, again

> "Not a few, and some very memorable, efforts had been made before the 16th century to bring about a reformation of doctrine, but these had almost invariably been promptly visited with the censure of the church" [2]

After Martin Luther, no other person raised a voice against the senseless doctrines of the Church and papal supremacy, even to the limited extent that Luther did in the sixteenth century Christianity thus continued its journey uninterrupted on the path it was forced to tread At last, the Church lost the influence it weilded on the Christendom and gave place to crass materialism

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1 E B R Vol XX, p 320
2 *Ibid*, p 321

The religion of the West today is nothing but materialism, yet, Christianity has been unable to bring forth a single individual who could have combated the evils of materialism, brought back the West to the fountain-head of true religion, restored faith in true Christianity and upheld the moral and spiritual values against utilitarian, pleasure-seeking norms of the present-day sensate culture Instead of accepting the challenge of the modern age and finding out solutions to the present problems within the religious view of life and the world, the West appears to have lost all hope in Christianity itself.

Almost the same story was repeated in the East also Hinduism lost its way by asundering its relation with the Creator of the Universe, giving up its simplicity and depriving itself of the moral and spiritual vitality. It became more an impracticable and complicated system of speculative thought by losing the chord of unalloyed monotheism and equality of mankind , for, these are the two basic tenets on which any religion can flourish, with its roots deep into the soul of man and branches providing shade and solace to the human beings

Upanishadic writers tried their level best to put a stop to this contamination by totally discarding the rituals that had gained a foothold into Hinduism, and replacing it by philosophical doctrines—a conceptual interpretation of the faith These elucidations being grounded in pantheistic monism or attaining unity through plurality were acclaimed in the literary and intellectual circles but the masses, who were intellectually at a lower level and yearned for rituals and practical manifestation of the monistic doctrines, remained unimpressed by the idealism of the *Upanishads*. The result was that Hinduism gradually lost its vitality; dis-satisfaction and incredulity gained ground and the revolt against the Brahmanic order found expression in Buddhism in the sixth century B C.

Buddha founded a new religion (if it can be so named, for Buddhism eliminated the concepts of Divinity, Hereafter and requital—the essential ingredients for any religion) which opposed the then prevalent caste system and Brahmanic ritual order, sought

annihilation of human misery through suppression of all desires—the will-to-live and will-to-possess—and commended moral behaviour, right mental attitude, non-violence, kindness and social service. It rapidly spread to south-east Asia and a few other countries.

Buddhism, however, soon deviated from the teachings of its founder. Incorporating into its system the idol worship and ritualism against which Buddhism had started its career, there remained nothing to distinguish it from Hinduism except the numerous categories of gods and goddesses to which the latter owed allegiance Buddhism was ever willing to adapt itself to the environment of local conditions where it spread, it was divided into numerous sects, incorporated superstitions, complicated ideas and concepts and degenerated into a cess-pool of moral corruption Prof Ishwar Topa observes in *Hindustani Tamaddun*

> " . . the Kingdom that was established under the patronage of Buddhism began to present a vast scene of idolatry The atmosphere in the monasteries was changing and heretic innovations were being introduced one after another "[1]

The degeneration of Buddhism has been described thus by Jawahar Lal Nehru in the *Discovery of India*

> "Brahmanism made of Buddha an *avatar*, a god So did Buddhism. The Mahayana doctrine spread rapidly, but it lost in quality and distinctiveness what it gained in extent The monasteries became rich centres of vested interests, and their discipline became lax Magic and superstition crept into popular forms of worship There was a progressive degeneration of Buddhism in India after the first millennium of its existence Mrs Rhys Davis points out its diseased state during that period 'Under the over-powering influence of these sickly imaginations the moral teachings of Gautama have been almost hid from view The theories grew and flourished, each new step, each new

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1 Dr Ishwar Topa, Vol I, pp 137-138

hypothesis demanded another, until the whole sky was filled with forgeries of the brain, and the nobler and simpler lessons of the founder of the religion were smothered beneath the glittering mass of metaphysical subtleties[1] . . . There were several bright periods subsequently and many remarkable men arose. But both Brahminism and Buddhism deteriorated and degrading practices grew up in them It became difficult to distinguish the two "[2]

In none of the countries in which Buddhism had spread a person was born during the long period of its rule, who could reform the degenerated Buddhism, infuse the breath of new life into it and bring it back to the teachings of Gautama

Hinduism gradually absorbed Buddhism into itself and finally Sankaracharya banished it almost totally from India in the eighth century by reviving the old Hindu faith. Hardly any trace of Buddhism was left in India , wherever it still survived, it was little more than a decadent, local cult of no importance On the other hand, Sankaracharya, endowed with intelligence, courage and religious fervour succeeded in eliminating Buddhism from India but he could not or perhaps never intended to revive the ancient Hindu religion in its original and pristine purity by inculcating faith in the unity of the Supreme Being, direct relationship between man and God, equality and social justice As a result, both the Indian religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, still survive with the sickly characteristics of their decadent state viz superstitious beliefs and rituals, idolatry and caste system. V. S Ghate, the late Professor of Sanskrit in Elphinstone College, Bombay, writing on Sankaracharya in the Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics says that 'the greatest object of Sankara's labours was the revival of the system of religion and philosophy taught in the *Upanisads*[3]'. Sankara, succeeded in putting down the hetrodox systems and establishing the doctrine of pantheistic monism, as presented in

1 Taken from Radhakrishnan's '*Indian Philosophy*'

2 Nehru . pp 141-142

3 E R E , p 186

the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagwad Gita*, but he 'did not attack or destroy idolatory'[1] Sankara, condemned all ritualism and *Karama* and at the same time defended the worship of popular gods, which was to him a 'symbolism rather than idolatory'.[1] Sankara considered idolatory a necessity at one stage of religious growth which is either given up or suffered to remain from its harmlessness when the religious spirit is mature Thus Sankara 'allowed idols as symbols of the great infinite for those who cannot rise themselves to the comprehension of the one, changeless, non-qualified *Brahman*'[2]

In this way all the efforts made from the time of Sankaracharya down to Dayanand Sarswati and Mahatma Gandhi to reform the eastern religions proved fruitless to renovate Hinduism and Buddhism in a manner to make them compatible with revelation, religious urge of humanity and the requirements of changing times. These religions have, as a result of this stagnation, succumbed to materialism, the vast areas of human life and behaviour have drifted beyond their reach while they have themselves taken shelter behind temples and shrines, soulless rituals and traditions Any number of obscurantist movements working for the revival of the ancient Indian languages and culture can be seen at work in the country today but none is capable of giving a soul-stirring call inviting people back to religion by reinterpreting the true content of religious and moral faith in the light of current needs

No religion can maintain its vigour for long and offer a satisfying answer to the questions of ever-changing life unless it can produce guides and standard-bearers who can infuse a breath of new life into its followers through their personal example of unflinching faith, moral and spiritual excellence, immaculate sincerity, heroic sacrifice, self-confidence, ardent zeal, intellectual eminence and erudite scholarship Life always poses new problems, temptations of flesh are ever on its side, materialistic urge in man always impels him to take the ways of self-indulgence and

1 E R E, p 189

2 *Ibid*

licentiousness, and, at the same time, we have always had men who were ardent and zealous supporters of the epicurean view and affluent living, materialistic brilliance and worldly success Therefore, unless a religion also gets indefatigable defenders, renovators and redeemers who can face the challenge of atheism and materialism, it cannot hope to remain a living force for its followers for long

Defence Against Heresy ·

History bears a testimony to the fact that there has never been a spell, however brief, during the past one and a half thousand years when the message of Islam was eclipsed or its teachings were engulfed by heresy, and the Islamic conscience became dormant enough to accept a contaminated faith. Whenever an effort was made from any quarter whatsoever to distort the tenets of Islam, pervert or falsify its teachings, or it was attacked by sensist-materialism, some one invariably came forward to accept the challenge and fight it out to the grief of Islam's adversary. History records many a powerful movement in its day, which posed a danger for Islam but now it is difficult to find out even the true impact of its thought Only a few people know today what *Qadriyah* (Rationalists believing in free will), *Jahmiyah* (Determinists), *ʿItizāl* (Dissenters), creation of the Qurʾān, Existentialist Monism, *Dīn-i-Ilāhi*, etc , exactly mean, although these represented, at one time or the other, very important schools of thought and, with the most powerful imperial powers of their day and some extremely learned and able persons at their back they had threatened to stifle Islam. Finally, however, it was Islam which gained ascendancy over these contending forces. These powerful movements are known today as simply different schools of thought and are to be found now in philosophical and dialectical treatises This tradition of struggle against un-Islam, the spirit to preserve and renovate the prestine teachings of the faith and the effort to infuse people with a revolutionary spirit to re-assert the divine message are as old as Islam itself.

Lost Sources of History:

The responsibility for not bringing to light this memorable chapter of Islamic History does not exclusively rest with the historians All those persons are equally responsible who refuse to accord recognition to the works not formally categorised as historical literature and catalogued as such in one or the other library. A vast treasure of information on the social, political and historical events of the bygone days is in fact to be found in the religious works which can serve as a valuable source of history. These are the writings of the religious savants and scholars wherein they have laid bare their innermost feelings, given numerous accounts of the incidents they or their contemporaries had come across, quoted their teachers and mentors and recorded proceedings of the profound and heartfelt reunions of their masters and fellows There are compilations of letters and discourses from which we can gain access to the thoughts and ideas, feelings and emotions of their writers There are also monographs written for the refutation of innovations and deviations or to censure the wayward sections of society. If one could extend his vision to all these writings and had had time to cull out relevant data from these works, a complete and detailed history of Islamic missionary effort could be written to show that the effort to re-kindle the fire of religious ardour and dynamic energy into the followers of Islam has never ceased for a moment and that the Muslims too have never remained cold or indifferent to the call

Legacy of Islam:

This is a legacy of Islam which we have inherited But, by legacy we do not mean here a 'bequest', for Islam is a living religion What we have really inherited is the treasure consisting of the sureness of conviction, and immutable faith, Traditions of the Prophet, higher moral values, canonical laws and the magnificent Islamic literature which has been bequeathed to us by every single individual who ever worked for the establishment of the kingdom of God, braved the dangers of ignorance and materi-

alism, gave a call for the *Din* of Allah, revived the teachings of Islam and filled the people with faith and enthusiasm. In truth and reality, all those persons who have re-oriented Islam through painstaking researches into its original sources and re-interpretation of its doctrines, defended Islam against philosophies and schools of thought incompatible with it; saved it from discord and turmoil, compiled the Traditions of the Prophet or presided over different schools of *Fiqah*; showed to others the path of temperance and moderation, censured the society for its waywardness and made it turn from that path, dispelled the doubts by examining and elucidating the fundamentals of reason and logic, founded the new science of dialectics; carried on the work left by prophets and apostles of God, filled the people with zeal and self-confidence in their own inherent vitality; made the most inveterate enemies of Islam to acknowledge its truth—in short, all those who have pressed their spiritual, moral and intellectual capabilities to the service of the faith and, not unoften, accomplished what emperors and conquerors could never have achieved—have contributed to the legacy now owned by us and deserve our respect and approbation. Had not these defenders of Islam worked with ardent zeal and immaculate sincerity and made heroic sacrifices for the cause held dear by them, we would not have inherited what has been recounted in this volume and which still contains a reservoir of guidance and inspiration for us. We can be rightly proud of these ancestors of ours and present with confidence the story of their work and achievements before other nations

The writer of these pages has endeavoured to depict the picture of these eminent personalities and described what in his judgment can rightly be ascribed as their accomplishment in the field of Islamic revival and renovation

CHAPTER I

UMAR IBN ABDUL AZIZ

Reformist Endeavours of the First Century:

Soon after the *Khilafat-i-Rāshida* (the right-guided caliphate) came to an end and the Ummayyad empire, which was more Arab than Islamic, consolidated itself, the need for reformation and renovation in Islam was felt keenly. Customs, traditions and remembrances of the pagan past, which had been discredited and repressed under the impact of the Prophet's teachings and the vigilant eye of the *Khilafat-i-Rāshida*, began to re-assert themselves among the new Arab converts to Islam. The then Government was not organised according to the dictates of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*; its guiding lights were Arab diplomacy, expediency and interest of the State. Arab racialism, tribal pride, partisan spirit and nepotism, regarded as unpardonable sins during the days of the *Khilafat-i-Rāshida*, became the hall-mark of the new aristocracy. The unruly spirit of the Arabs, which had sought asylum in the far off deserts, returned again to re-assert itself; extravagance, pretentiousness and boastfulness took the place of virtuous deeds and moral excellence.[1] *Bait-ul-māl* (the State

1 The then mentality is aptly demonstrated by Abul Faraj Isb'hani in his book '*Aghāni*', in which he has related how two Arab Chiefs of the Ummayyad period, Haushab and ʿIkramah, vyingly challenged each other about the quantity of food required to feed the household and guests of each. As Haushab was likely to win in the contest, ʿIkramah purchased several hundred bags of flour, distributed it amongst his tribesmen for kneading and asked them to pile up the dough in a pit which was covered with grass. He then managed to get Haushab's horse pass over the pit. As the poor beast fell into the pit, its neck and head being only visible above the dough, 'Ikramah's fame about the quantity of flour required to feed his tribe soon spread far and wide, and many poets sang of his greatness. (*Rannāt ul-Mathalith* Vol I, pp 176-177.)

Exchequer) became personal property of the Caliphs who wasted public money on professional poets, eulogists, jugglers and buffoons The courtiers of the rulers began to be accorded a preferential treatment which gave them heart to break the law of the land [1] Music and singing grew almost to a craze [2]

The extravagant rulers, surrounded by dissolute parasites who flocked to the capital, demoralised the society and produced an aristocracy resembling the pagan Arab wastrels of the age of *Ignorance* in morals and behaviour. It appeared as if the pre-Islamic *Ignorance* had returned with a vendetta to settle its accounts of the past forty years with Islam

Religious Teachers of the Ummayyad period:

Although crass materialism had captured the soul of the ruling classes during the Ummayyad period, the masses had still not forsaken the moral values and the deep-seated deference for Islamic teachings The regard for moral worth and tenets of Islam was due mainly to those scholars of impeccable worth and ability who were held in high esteem by the masses for their moral and spiritual excellence, selflessness, piety, sagacity and beneficence Outside the governmental circles these persons weilded tremendous influence over the people which acted as a corrective force and saved the masses from falling a prey to the pull of wordly temptations The person most respected and loved during the period was ʿAli ibn Husain (Zainul ʿAbdin) In the simple, pure and saintly life led by him, ʿAli ibn Husain had no peer Once Hisham ibn ʿAbdul-Malik, the crown prince, came to the Kaʿaba for *Tawāf* (circumambulation) but owing to

1 The famous Christian poet Akhtal (d 59/701) once came completely drunk, in the court of Caliph 'Abdul-Malik Ibn Marwan, wine dripping from his beard and the cross on his chest, but nobody had the courage to remonstrate him (*Aghānī*, Vol VII, pp 177-178)

2 Once a famous singer of Iraq Hunain, visited Madina along with his party Such a large crowd gathered to hear his recital that the roof of the house in which he was singing gave way and Hunain died after receiving severe injuries (*Aghānī*, Vol II, pp 122-123)

the huge gathering he could not reach the *Hajr-i-Aswad.* He, therefore, sat down to wait till he could get a chance to kiss it. In the meantime ʿAli ibn Husain arrived and the people at once cleared the way for him to make the *Tawāf* and kiss *Hajr-i-Aswad.* Everyone present in the Kaʿaba received ʿAli ibn Husain with the utmost deference. At last Hisham, pretending as if he did not know ʿAli ibn Husain, asked who he was. The poet Farzdaq, who happened to be present on the occasion instantaneously composed an introductory ode for ʿAli ibn Husain. It is reported that certain additions were made to this famous ode later on but it is still regarded as a masterpiece of Arabic poetry. It opened with the verse:

Pebbles and paths of Mecca affirm his virtue;
The House of God knows him well as the environs do.

Other highly reputed religious scholars[1] of outstanding piety during the Ummayyad period were Hasan al-Muthanna, his son ʿAbdullah-al-Mahadh, Sālim ibn ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar, Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abū Bakr, Saʿeed ibn Musayʿib and ʿUrwah ibn Zubair. Complete detachment from the ruling circles of their day, immaculate selflessness, unswerving truthfulness, readiness to serve and make any sacrifice for the cause of religion, erudition and moral worth had made each of these persons an ideal of Islamic piety. The demoralisation that had set in owing to the immoral conduct of the ruling elite was undoubtedly on the increase but the moral influence weilded by these persons on the masses was not without a salutary effect, their pure and simple life was a standing reproach to the unprincipled this-wordliness of the rulers, which made people think of reforming their intemperate life

Political Revolution:

Gradually the contaminating influxion of the political revolution deepened and spread out, and, at the same time, there was a

1 For a detailed description see *al-Zahbi*: Vol I, pp 46, 77, 84 and 53, and *Sifat us-Safwah* · Vol II, pp 44, 47, 49 and 50

marked decrease in the number of religious teachers who could exert a strong and ennobling influence over the people like the pious souls of the preceding period Now it became impossible to revitalize the people and fill them with the faith and moral worth without a revolution in the State itself

The Ummayyad power was, however, entrenched in such a firm military strength that it was not possible to dislodge it, nor there existed any internal or external force which could dare to challenge it Not long before two efforts made by Husain ibn ʿAli and ʿAbdullah ibn Zubair had proved abortive and one could hardly expect any more armed insurrection for bringing about a political revolution Autocratic and hereditary form of government had produced a despondency which had left no hope for any change in the prevailing conditions and it appeared as if the fate of Muslims had been sealed for a fairly long time It required a miracle alone for the Islamic precepts to find an expression again in the political law guiding the community's behaviour And the miracle did happen at the most appropriate time

Accession of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz :

The miracle was the accession of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz to the throne in 99 A H (717 A D) He was a grandson of Marwan and his mother, Umm ʿĀsim, was a grand-daughter of ʿUmar I, the second Caliph The Ummayyad and the Farooqi families were thus jointly represented[1] in ʿUmar II, surnamed as

1 ʿUmar I had ordered that nobody should adulterate milk by mixing water into it Once, while wandering about at night to inquire into the condition of the people, he heard a woman asking her daughter to mix water into the milk before the day-break The girl refused by reminding her mother of the order given by the Caliph When the mother retorted by saying that the Caliph was not present and he would not know of it, the daughter replied that God is Omniscient even if Caliph was not present ʿUmar I was so pleased with the reply that he asked his son ʿĀsim to marry the girl, saying that he hoped that she will give birth to a man who would rule over Arabia ʿUmar II was the daughter's son of ʿĀsim (ʿAbdul Hakam pp 17-18)

the pious Caliph, who brought about the much-needed revolution.

ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAzīz was born in 61 A.H He was a cousin of the preceding Caliph, Sulaimān ibn ᶜAbdul Malik and had been posted as Governor of Madina since the time of Walīd ibn ᶜAbdul Malik, the Caliph before Sulaimān. The life led by him as Governor was entirely different from that he adopted as a Caliph. He was known as a polished and decorous aristocrat of refined taste Anybody could tell from the fragrance of perfumes he used that ᶜUmar has passed that way. He was all the rage for the fashionable youths of his day. Except for his integrity of character and righteous disposition there was nothing to suggest that he was destined to perform a memorable task in the history of Islam.

But he proved to be a standing miracle of Islam. The very way he ascended to the Caliphate was miraculous; for, nobody could have predicted the dramatic turn that the events took in bringing him to the throne He could not have hoped to be anything more than a viceroy under the hereditary custom of accession to the Caliphate, but God had willed otherwise. Sulaimān ibn ᶜAbdul Malik fell seriously ill and lost all hopes of recovery. He was anxious to leave the throne to one of his sons who were still minors. Shaken with this anxiety he got his sons put on longer dresses, uniforms and armours so that they might appear sizeable, but all his efforts proved fruitless. In his dreadful agony, he cast a pathetic glance over his sons and said: "He is really fortunate who has grown-up sons". Rejaʾ ibn Haiwah happened to be present at the time and he promptly proposed ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAzīz as the successor to the throne. Caliph Sulaiman accepted the suggestion and thus by his timely intervention Rejaʾ rendered yeoman service for the revival of Islam.

Character of ᶜUmar II:

Immediately upon his accession, ᶜUmar dismissed provincial governors known to be cruel or unjust to the people. All the jewellery and valuable presents brought before him on accession

to the throne were deposited in the State treasury He was now a completely changed man ; he considered himself a successor to Caliph ʿUmar I, son of Khattāb, rather than Sulaimān ibn ʿAbdul Malik Slaves of the royal household were emancipated, the royal court modelled after Persian and Byzantine Royal patterns was now marked by an austere and primitive simplicity. He returned to the State not only his ancestoral fief but even the valuables and jewellery his wife had received from her father and brothers He led such a simple and ascetic life as it would have been difficult to find among the monks and recluses much less the kings and emperors. On several occasions he was late for Friday prayers since he had to wait till his only shirt dried up after a wash Before Caliph ʿUmar II ascended to the throne *Baitul-Māl*, the public treasury, was treated as a personal property of the King from which members of royal family were granted enormous sums, but now they had to be content with the paltry stipends Once, when he was talking to his daughters, he noticed that the children cupped their mouths while talking to him. On making enquiries he found that since only pulses and onions were available in his house on the day which had been taken by the children, they cupped their mouths lest its smell should offend him With tears in his eyes, ʿUmar said "My child, would you like to have sumptuous food and your father to be consigned to Hell[1] ?" He was the ruler of the mightiest empire of his day but he did not have enough money to perform the *Hajj*. He once asked his servant if he had saved anything so that he could go for the *Hajj* The servant informed him that he had only ten or twelve *dinars* and thus he could not undertake the journey After a few days, ʿUmar II received a sum sufficient to perform the *Hajj* from his personal holdings The servant congratulated ʿUmar II, and said that now he could go for the *Hajj* ʿUmar II however, replied . "We have been deriving benefit from these holdings since a long time Now Muslims have a right to enjoy its fruits" Then he got the entire proceeds deposited in the public treasury

ʿAbdul Hakam, p 55

ᶜUmar II never spent more than two *dirhams* on his messing. If any official came to see him and began talking of the Caliph's private affairs, he would promptly put off the candle provided by the State and ask for his own candle to be brought in. He would never use the hot water taken from the State mess or even inhale the fragrance of musk belonging to the *Bait-ul-Māl*[1].

ᶜUmar II was careful not for his person alone. He always exhorted the State officials to be extremely cautious in their dealings involving the State property The Governor of Madina, Abū-Bakr ibn Hazm had submitted an application to Sulaimān ibn ᶜAbdul Malik demanding candlesticks and a lamp-glass for the official work By the time the requisition reached the Caliph, Sulaimān had died and it was placed before ᶜUmar II He wrote "O Abū-Bakr, I remember the days when you wandered during the dark nights of winter without candlesticks and light, and, were you then in a better condition than now? I hope you have now enough candlesticks to spare a few for conducting the business of the State.[2]" Similarly on another request made for supply of paper for official work, he remarked · "Make the point of your pen finer, write closely and concisely, for, Muslims do not require such detailed reports which are unnecessarily a burden on the State exchequer."[2]

Extreme cautiousness, moderation, simplicity and unaffected piety were not the only feature of ᶜUmar's character. He transformed the view-point of his government making the weal of the people the sole object of administration. Before ᶜUmar II the State was concerned mainly with collecting revenues and spending it, having nothing to do with the moral guidance and religious instruction of the people The historic dictum of ᶜUmar II that 'Muhammad was sent as a Prophet and not as a collector',[3]

1 ᶜAbdul-Hakam, p 44
2 *Ibid*, p 64
3 Abū Yūsuf, p 75

adequately illustrates the objective he had set before the State under him In truth and reality, during the entire period of his Caliphate he sought to translate this idea into practice He always preferred principles, moral dictates and demands of the faith to political expediency and never cared a whit for pecuniary losses suffered by the State if the policy commended by religion entailed it During his reign the non-Muslims were embracing Islam in ever-increasing numbers which meant a dwindling income from the poll-tax. As the sharp fall in revenues posed a danger to the financial stability of the State, ʿUmar's attention was drawn towards it But his reply was that the situation was eminently in accord with the objectives underlying the prophethood of Muhammad To another official he wrote "I would be too glad if all the non-Muslims embrace Islam and (owing to the drying up of income from poll-tax) we have to take up cultivation for earning our living "[1] A fixed amount of land revenue was to be remitted by the provincial Government of Yaman every year whether it had a favourable crop or not ʿUmar II ordered that the revenues should be assessed in accordance with the agricultural production every year He added that he would willingly accept it even if a handful of grain were to be received in pursuance of his order.[2] He discontinued levy of octroi throughout the kingdom saying that it was prohibited by the Qur'ān

> *O my people ! Give full measure and full weight in justice and wrong not people in respect of their goods And do not evil in the earth, causing corruption*
>
> (*Hud* 85)

ʿUmar II used to say that people have made octroi lawful by changing its name.[3] Barring the few taxes allowed by the *Shariʿah*, he abolished all taxes and duties levied by his

1 *Manāqib*, p 64
2 ʿAbdul Hakam, p 126
3 *Ibid* p 99

predecessors.[1] All the land and sea routes were opened for trade without any embargo whatsoever.[2]

Far-reaching reforms were introduced in the administration of the kingdom. Some of the steps taken were Weights and measures were standardised,[3] State officials were precluded from entering into any business or trade,[3] unpaid labour was made illegal,[4] pasture-lands and game-preserves reserved for the royal family or other dignitaries were distributed to the landless cultivators or made a public property,[5] strict measures were taken to stop illegal gratification of state employees who were forbidden to accept gifts,[6] all officers holding responsible posts were directed to afford adequate facilities to those who wanted to present their complaints to them in person, a proclamation was made every year on the occasion of pilgrimage that any one who would bring to the notice of administration any mal-treatment by an State official or prefer a useful suggestion, shall be rewarded 100 to 300 *dinars*[7]

Solicitude for Moral Reformation :

After the *Khilāfat-i-Rāshida* came to an end, the Caliphs began to consider themselves simply as monarchs and administrators; they were neither capable nor had the time to bother about the moral and social conditions of their subjects In fact, the Caliphs were never expected to advise people in religious affairs, take steps for their moral, religious or spiritual advancement or assume the role of a pulpiter. This was considered to be the domain of scholars and religious luminaries, *ᶜulmā* and traditionists. ᶜUmar Ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAziz did away with this dichotomy and proved himself to

1 ᶜAbdul Hakam, p 99
2 *Ibid*, p 98
3 *Ibid*, p 99
4 *Ibid*, p 100
5 *Ibid*, p 97
6 *Ibid*, p 162
7 *Ibid*, p 141

by really a successor of the Prophet, as his office implied No sooner did he ascend the Caliphate, he sent out quite lengthy letters and directives which dealt with more about religious and moral reforms than with the so-called administrative affairs His edicts embodied a spirit of preaching, religious and moral, rather than the dispensation of government In his letters he would compare the social and moral condition of people with that in the days of the Prophet and early Caliphate and elaborate the fiscal and administrative system required to bring about an Islamic regenaration,[1] impress on the governors and generals the importance of timely performance of their prayers and presiding at these services,[2] exhort public servants to inculcate the awe of God and meticulously follow the regulations of the *Shari^cah*,[3] charge his officers with the responsibility of spreading the message of Islam in the provinces under them, which he considered to be the sole objective of Divine revelation and the prophethood of Muhammad,[4] insist on the enforcement of what is incumbent and on the prevention of that which is forbidden, and warn them of the harmful effects of neglecting this obligation,[5] elaborate the criminal law of Islam and instruct the magistrates to be lenient in awarding punishments,[6] draw attention towards the deviations and innovations, customs and foreign traditions that had found a way into the life of the people, forbid lamentations and put a stop to the custom requiring women to accompany the funeral processions as well as their public appearance,[7] denigrate tribal partisanship,[7] and, prohibit laxity in the use of *nabidh* which gradually led to drinking bouts and to numerous other vices [8]

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1 ʿAbdul Hakam, p 69
2 *Ibid*, p 79
3 *Ibid*, p 92
4 *Ibid*, pp 93-94
5 *Ibid* p 167
6 *Ibid*, pp 80-81
7 *Ibid*, p 108
8 *Ibid*, p 102

Compilation of Traditions :

The study and cultivation of religious sciences did not escape attention of ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbul ᶜAziz Drawing the attention of an eminent man of letters of his time, Abū Bakr ibn Hazm, towards compilation of the traditions of the Holy Prophet, he wrote .

> "Reduce into writing whatever traditions of the Holy Prophet you can collect, for I fear that after the traditionists pass away, the knowledge will also perish."[1]

He made a pointed reference to the collections of ᶜUmrah bint ᶜAbdur Rahmān Ansāriyah and Qāsim ibn Muhammad ibn Abū Bakr which he wanted to be recorded. The task was not simply entrusted to Abū Bakr ibn Hazm but circulars were issued to provincial governors and other notable *ᶜulemā* commanding them to 'collect all the traditions of the Prophet of Islam wherever these could be found' Simultaneously, ᶜUmar II also granted stipends to those entrusted with the task so that they could pursue the job whole-heartedly[2]

ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAziz was himself a man of learning and he took keen interest in the interpretation of the Traditions and cannon law In the beginning of his Caliphate he circulated an edict which said :

> "Islam has laid down certain limits, duties and obligations. Whoever will follow these, shall be rewarded by a truer content of the faith, but those who do not pursue these, their faith shall remain imperfect. If God keeps me live, I will teach you the fundamentals of the faith and will make you follow these, but if I die earlier, I won't care, for I am not at all eager for your company"[3]

Defender of the Faith :

The unalloyed Islamic thought and spirit of religion that ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAziz tried to infuse among the Muslims

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1 Bukhārī Vol I, p 20

2 ᶜAbdul Hakam, p 167

3 Bukhārī (*Kitāb-ul-Imān*), Vol I, p 6

and give a practical shape through the State he presided, can be gauged from the letters and edicts he issued from time to time to the different functionaries of his government. These despatches show what a deep understanding of Islam he had without the least trace of pre-Islamic *Ignorance* or the stamp of Ummayyad royalty.

It was once reported to him that certain tribal chiefs and Ummayyad aristocrats had revived the pagan custom[1] of entering into alliances and were giving a call to one another in the name of tribal solidarity during their fights and forays. This custom cut at the very root of Islamic concept of brotherhood and the social order it wanted to bring into existence. Earlier rulers would have been complacent at it or even encouraged the practice as a political expediency but ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAziz, being fully alive to the pernicious implications of the practice, issued an order to Dhahhāk ibn ᶜAbdur-Rahmān for curbing the evil forthwith. In it he writes:

> "Praise be to God and peace unto His Apostle. Thereafter you should know that Allah does not like any religion other than Islam, which he has chosen for Himself and His bondsmen. Allah has been pleased to honour His religion, Islam, with an Scripture, which has made Islam distinct from un-Islam. In it He says:
>
> *Now hath come unto you light from Allah and a plain Scripture. Whereby Allah guideth him who seeketh His good pleasure unto paths of peace. He bringeth them out of darkness unto light by His decree and guideth them unto a straight path.*
>
> (*Al-Mai'da* : 15-16)
>
> Allah also says:
>
> *With truth We have sent it down, and with truth had it descended.*
>
> *And We have sent thee as naught else save a bearer of good tidings and a warner.*
>
> (*Bani Israel* : 105)

1. A pre-Islamic custom under which two tribes took an oath of fealty to help each other in every eventuality irrespective of the jutice or otherwise of the cause for which their help was to be sought.

"God Almighty endowed prophethood on Muhammad (peace be upon him) and revealed the Scripture to him. Then, O Arabs, as you know, you lived in ignorance, idolatry and impurity, were plunged in poverty, disorder and chaos; fights and forays baulked large in your life, you were looked down upon by others, and, whatever little light of Divine Guidance was available to other nations, you were deprived even of that There was no perversion and depravity which was not to be found amongst you. If you lived, yours was a life of ignorance and infidelity, and, if you died, you were consigned to the Hell. At last Allah saved you from these evils, idolatry and anarchy, hatred and conflicts Although many amongst you denied and decried the Prophet of God, he remained steadfast in his endeavour till a few poor people amongst you responded to his call Fearing the worst, these men always ran for their lives but God gave them asylum, sent His succour to them and gave them strength through those whom He chose to enlighten with Islam The Prophet of God was to depart from this world and Allah had to fulfil the promise made to His messenger. The promise of Allah never changes but none save a few of the faithful believed in what God Almighty had promised

He it is Who hath sent His messenger with the guidance and the Religion of Truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religion, however much the idolaters may be averse.

(*Al-Taubah 33*)

"In another verse Allah has promised to the Muslims.

Allah hath promised such of you as believe and do good works that He will surely make them to succeed (the present rulers) in the earth even as He caused those who were before them to succeed (others); and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He hath approved for them, and will give them in exchange safety after this fear. They serve Me. They ascribe nothing as partner unto Me

(*An-Nūr: 55*)

"Allah has fulfilled the promise made by him to His Prophet and the Muslims Therefore, O Muslims, remember that whatever God Almighty has bestowed on you is solely on account of Islam, you are victorious on your enemies in the world and will be raised as a witness unto others in the Hereafter But for Islam, you have no refuge in this world nor after death. you have nothing to fall back upon nor a source of strength, no protection, no safeguard And if you are fortunate enough to see the fulfilment of the promise made by Allah, you need to pin your hopes in the abode of the Hereafter, since God has said.

As for the Abode of the Hereafter we assign it unto those who seek not oppression in the earth, nor yet corruption

The sequel is for those who ward off (evil)

(Al-Qasas · 83)

"I warn you of the disaster that will befall you if you do not act according to the teachings of the *Qur'ān* The bloodshed and disorder, turmoil and affliction to which you had been exposed as a result of disregarding the guidance provided by the Scripture is recent history. You should, therefore, desist from what has been prohibited by Allah in His Scripture, for, there is nothing more dreadful than the admonition sounded by God Almighty I have been constrained to write this letter on account of the reports reaching me from the countryside about those who have been recently sent there as stewards and administrators These are an ignorant and stupid set of persons who are not aware of God's commandments, they have forgotten the special favour and benevolence of Allah over them or they have rather shown ingratitude for the undeserved favours bestowed on them I have been told that they seek the help of the people of Mudhar and Yaman, for they think that these tribes are their allies and partisans Glorified be Allah, Who alone deserves all praise. What an ungrateful and ill-beseeming people these are, and how

inclined they are to invite death, destruction and doom! They have no eyes to see what a despicable position they have chosen for themselves, nor are they aware how they have deprived themselves of peace and amity. Now I realise that miscreants and ruffians are shaped as such by their own intentions and also that Hell was not created in vain Have they never heard of the commandment of God Almighty?

The believers are naught else than brothers. Therefore make peace between your brethren and observe your duty to Allah tha' haply ye may obtain mercy

(Al-Hujurāt . 10).

And have they not heard this verse too?

This day have I perfected your religion for you and completed My favour unto you, and have chosen for you as religion AL-ISLAM

(Al-Ma'idah 3).

"I have been told that certain tribes are entering into alliances to help one another against their enemies as they used to do in the bygone days of *Ignorance*, although the Prophet has prohibited unconditional alliances for helping each other. The Prophet has said 'There is no partisanship in Islam' In the times of *Ignorance*, allies expected help from each other in every unjust cause, no matter whether it led to oppression or wrongdoing, transgression of the commands of God or of the Prophet

"I warn everyone who may happen to read my letter or hear its content against taking any shelter except Islam and seeking amity of anyone except God Almighty and His Prophet. I again warn everyone with all the emphasis at my command and seek to make Allah my witness against these persons, for He has authority over every being and He is nearer to everyone than his jugular veins"[1]

1 ʿAbdul Hakam, pp. 104-107

The directives sent by ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz to the commander of a military expedition illustrate the extent to which he had imbibed the Qurʾānic mode of thought and view-point, and how he differed diametrically from other rulers and emperors of his time In one of his edicts to Manṣūr ibn Ghālib he wrote :

"This is a directive from the bondsman of Allah and Commander of the Faithful to Manṣūr ibn Ghālib Whereas the Commander of the Faithful has charged Manṣūr to wage war against those who might oppose him, the latter is also instructed to inculcate awe of God ; since, it constitutes the best of provisions, the most effective strategy and the real power. For the sin is even more dangerous than the ruses of the enemy, the Commander of the Faithful bids upon Manṣūr that instead of taking fright of his enemy, he should fear transgressing the limits of God. We overcome our enemies in the battlefield only because of their vices and sins, for, had it not been so, we would not have had the courage to face them We cannot deploy troops in the same numbers as our enemies can do nor do we possess the equipments they have got Thus, if we equate overselves with our enemies in misdeeds and transgressions, they would undoubtedly gain a victory over us by virtue of their numerical superiority and strength. Behold, if we are not able to gain ascendancy over our enemies on account of our righteousness, we would never be in a position to defeat them through our might. We need not keep an eye upon anything more than the enmity of our own wickedness nor do we have to hold in leash anything more than our own viciousness You should realise the fact that God Almighty has deputed wardens over you who never part company with you and they are aware of whatever you do in your camps and cantonments secretly or in public Therefore, do not put yourself to shame by exceeding the limits of God ; be kind to others, especially as you have left your hearths and homes for the sake of

God. Never consider yourselves superior to your enemies, nor take your victory for granted because of the sinfulness of your foes, for many a people worse than his enemy was granted ascendancy in the past. Therefore, seek the help of God against your own temptations in the same way as you desire the succour of God against your opponent. I would also beseech God's blessings for myself and you.

"Commander of the Faithful also bids Mansūr ibn Ghālib that he should treat his men with leniency. He should not require his troops to undertake toilsome journeys, nor refuse to encamp when they require rest The troops enfeebled by exertion and long travels, should not be required to face an enemy whose forces and the beasts of burden are taking rest at their own place. Thus if Mansūr does not accord a humane treatment to his men, his enemy would easily gain ascendancy over Mansūr's forces. Verily, help can be sought from God alone

" For giving rest to his men and the beast of burden and also for getting his armaments repaired, the Commander of the Faithful orders Mansūr ibn Ghālib to break his journey on every Friday for the whole day and night thereof. He is also ordered to encamp far away from the habitations which have entered into treaty relations with us, and allow none from his troops to visit their dwellings, markets or gatherings Only those of his men who are firm in faith and trustworthy and who would neither be ill-disposed nor commit a sin against the people could be allowed to visit such habitations for collection of lawful dues You are as much bound to guarantee their rights as they are enjoined to fulfil the duties devolving on them *i e.* you have to honour your obligations to them so long as they do theirs. You should never try to gain an advantage over your enemy through persecution of those who have come under your protection, for you have already got a share (in the shape of *Jaziah* or poll-tax) in their earnings and you niether need to increase it nor they are bound to pay more.

We have too not cut down your provisions, nor deprived you of anything required for strengthening you You have been given charge of our best forces and provided with everything required for the job Now you need to pay attention to the land of polytheists, our enemies, and need not concern yourself with those who have come under our protection After having made the best possible arrangements for you, we have trust in God Almighty There is no power, no might, save from Allah.

"And the Commander of the Faithful further directs that you shall appoint only such persons as your spies from amongst the Arabs and non-Arabs who are guileless and trustworthy, for the intelligence received through deceitful persons is hardly of any use Even if a treacherous fellow passes on to you some correct information, he ought really to be treated as an spy of the enemy and not yours May God have peace on you "[1]

In another circular letter to the provincial chiefs he wrote

"Verily God has entrusted the charge of administration to me I have not accepted this responsibility for the sake of riches or sensual delight, feasts or attires, for God had already favoured me with a fortune that only a few can boast of. For I fully realise the grave responsibility of the charge entrusted to me, I have taken upon myself this obligation with a great deal of anxiety and heart-searching I know I would be called upon to render the account in the presence of God when claimants and defendants would both be present to argue their cases on the Day of Requital—a Burdensome Day, indeed, save for those on whom Allah showers his mercy and whom He protects from the grievous ordeal.

"I bid you to be cautious and God-fearing in all the affairs of the State committed to your charge and ask you to fulfil your obligations, perform that which has been ordained by God and desist from the acts prohibited by the

1 ʿAbdul Hakam, pp 84-87

Sharīʿah. You ought to keep an eye upon yourself and your actions, be cautious of the acts that unite you with Allah, on the one hand, and your liegemen, on the other. You are aware that the salvation and safety lies in complete submission to the Almighty and the ultimate goal of all endeavours should be, by the same token, to make preparations for success on the Appointed Day.

"If you will, you might take a lesson from the happenings around you. Only then I can drive home the truth to you through my preachings.

"May God have peace on you "[1]

Propagation of Islam:

The efforts of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz were not limited to the enforcement of the *Sharīʿah*, as the law of the land, and reformation of the Muslims only. He also paid attention towards spreading the message of Islam among the non-Muslims, and his endeavours were also successful on account of his personal example of simple life, unaffected piety, unswerving uprightness and immaculate sincerity, Balāzuri writes in *Futūh-ul-Buldān*:

> "ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz wrote seven letters to the rajas in India inviting them to embrace Islam. He promised that if they did so, he would guarantee continued existence of their kingdoms and their rights and obligations would be the same as those of the other Muslims
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> "The name and fame of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz had already reached those lands and when they received ʿUmar's despatch they embraced Islam and adopted Arab names.[2]
>
> "Ismaʿīl ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Abi al-Mahājir, Governor of Maghrib (north-west Africa), administered the land with flawless justice and gave a good account of his character and morals He initiated proselytising activities among the Barber tribes Thereafter ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz

1 ʿAbdul Hakam, pp 92-93
2 Balāzuri, pp 446-447.

sent a letter inviting those people to embrace Islam which was read out in huge gatherings of the natives by Isma'il. A large number of people were converted to Islam and at last Islam became the predominant faith of the land [1]

.. 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz also wrote letters to the rulers and chiefs of Trans-oxiana[2] and exempted new converts to Islam in Khurasan from the payment of poll-tax (*Jaziah*) He also granted stipends and rewards to those who embraced Islam and got constructed rest houses for the travellers "[3]

Financial Reforms:

The financial reforms embarked upon by 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz viz remission of numerous taxes and tithes disallowed by the *Shari'ah*, did not result in pecuniary difficulties or deficits in the State income On the contrary, people became so much well-off that it became difficult to find destitutes and beggars who would accept the poor-due (*Zakāt*)

Yahya ibn Sa'eed relates that 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz had appointed him to collect the poor-due in Africa When he got the dues collected, he looked around for the needy and hard up persons, but he could not find a single individual who could be rendered assistance. He adds that 'Umar's economic policy had made everybody a man of substance and, therefore, he had no alternative but to purchase a number of slaves and then emancipate them on behalf of the Muslim populace [4]

Another man from the Quraish reports that during the extremely short reign of 'Umar ibn 'Abdul 'Azīz people used to remit substantial amounts pertaining to the poor-due to the State

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1. Balāzuri, p 339
2 Countries in Central Asia to the north of river Oxus (*Ma-wara-un-Nahr* in Arabic)
3 Balāzuri, p 432
4 'Abdul Hakam, p 69

exchequer for being distributed among the poor, but these had to be returned to them as nobody entitled to receive these charities was to be found. He says that everyone had become so well-off during ʿUmar's time that nobody remained in straitened circumstances entitled to receive the poor-due.[1]

Apart from the prosperity of the masses, which is invariably a by-product of the Islamic form of government, the more important change accomplished by the regime of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz was the diversion in inclination and aptitude, mood and trend of the populace. His contemporaries narrate that whenever a few friends met during the regime of Walīd, they used to converse about buildings and architecture for that was the rage of Walīd; Sulaimān was fond of women and banquets, and these became the fad of his days; but, during the reign of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz the prevailing demeanour and subjects for discussion were prayers, supplicatory and benedicatory, obligatory and supererogatory. Whenever a few people gathered, they would ask each other about the voluntary prayers one offered for acquiring spiritual benefits, the portion of Qurʾān recited or committed to memory, fast observed every month, and so on so forth.[2]

The guiding light for ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz and the impelling force behind his endeavours were his unflinching faith, the love and awe of the Supreme Being and conviction of accountability on the Day of Resurrection. Whatever he did was solely on account of the inducement, if inducement it can be called, to propitiate God Almighty. This was the urge and driving force which had made the ruler of the most powerful and extensive empire of the day to lead a life of austerity, forbearance and abstinence. If anybody advised him to raise his standard of living, as his position and office demanded, he would recite the Qurʾānic dictum:

> *... I fear, if I rebel against my Lord, the retribution of an Awful Day.*
>
> (*Al-Anʿām : 15*)

1 ʿAbdul Hakam, p 128

2 Tabri, Vol VIII, p 98

Once ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz said to this servant: "Allah has favoured me with a disposition, insatiable and ambitious; no sooner do I attain an object I long for, I set my heart upon a still higher objective. Now I have reached a sublimation after which nothing remains to be coveted. Now my ambition aspires for Paradise alone."[1]

Once he asked a certain sage for counsel, who said: "Of what avail would it be to thee, if the entire mankind were sent to Heaven and thou were consigned to Hell? Similarly, what would thou lose, if thou were awarded Heaven and all others sent to the Hell?" On hearing this ʿUmar's qualm knew no bounds and he wept so bitterly that the fire in the chafing-dish in front of him got extinguished by his tears.[2] Yazīd ibn Haushab once said that ʿUmar had so great a fear of God that it seemed as if the Heaven and Hell had been created by God only for him and Hasan al-Basri.

If Providence had only granted ʿUmar the span of rule enjoyed by his predecessors, the world of Islam would have witnessed a complete and lasting revolution changing the course of its history. But the Ummayyads who had been hit hard during the reign of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz and who saw power and influence slipping out of their hands, openly regretted the day when the families of ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb and the Ummayyads' had maritally been united. They could not endure the ordeal any longer for it was against their grain, and they soon found a way to get rid of the most virtuous Muslim of their times. ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz died in the middle of 101 A. H. after a rule of only two years and five months. There are reasons to believe that a slave in the employ of the Caliph was commissioned by his family to administer poison to him.[3]

1. ʿAbdul Hakam, p. 61 and *Sifat us-Safwah*, Vol. III, p. 156
2. ʿAbdul Hakam, pp. 108-109.
3. ʿAbdul Hakam, p. 118, Ibn Kathīr, Vol. IX, pp. 209-10 and *Sīrat*, p. 239

CHAPTER II

HASAN AL-BASRI

Atrophy of Faith and Moral Decadence :

After the death of ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAziz, there was a complete reversal of the State policy to the ways of his predecessors. *Jahiliyah* again returned with a vengeance to undo every reform ᶜUmar had introduced. Yazid II, who succeeded ᶜUmar, and his successors too, took full advantage of the position and power enjoyed by them to gratify the grasping demands of their kinsmen.

Hereditary and despotic rule along with the affluence of Ummayyads had by now begun to give birth to a nobility, hypocrite and time-server, spendthrift and libertine, whose morals and code of conduct were not different from the rakes of other nations Taking after the ways of the then nobility, pursuit of pleasure and gay abandon threatened to become the prevailing taste of the masses Moral and spiritual transformation, temperate and righteous living emanating from the true content of a faith, constitutes the most valuable heritage of prophetic teachings and a perennial source of vitality to the *Ummah*. But this-worldly attitude of life now threatened to inundate the warmth of spirit, faith and the awe of God thereby causing the failure of spiritual forces and atrophy of moral excellence. It was in truth a moment of great danger for the *Ummah* ; it appeared to be the beginning of the end. The State being callously indifferent to the virtues it ought to have upheld, blatantly nourished and encouraged its representatives who denigrated moral propriety and rectitude. The self-indulgent and luxurious ways of the elite were a standing allurement for the fast spreading vices like opulence, luxury and indolence The Prophet of Islam had flooded the heart of his followers with reverence, awe, complete submission and a living

relationship with the Almighty but these qualities were now on the wane It was a deficiency which could have never been redeemed by brilliant conquests or expanding dimensions of the empire, or, rather, as the history shows, the diminution of spirit is an irretrievable loss for any people who are once made to suffer its impoverishment

Had this reservoir of vitality and dynamic energy been left unattended to be crumbled and smothered by the then social and political forces of profanation, Muslims would have soon become a materialistic and self-indulgent people devoid of any conception of the life-after-death The Prophet of Islam had repeatedly expressed his anxiety, towards the end of his life, that Muslims might be swallowed by the pleasures of the world like earlier nations A few days before his demise, the Prophet had apprised his companions of this danger thus.

> "I have no apprehension from your poverty and indigence, what I fear is that the world might shower down its affluence and luxuries as it did on the people before you, and you might begin contending amongst you, thereby exposing yourself to the danger of being annihilated like the nations preceding you"[1]

Endeavours to Combat the Evil:

The danger to which the Holy Prophet had alluded was soon to manifest itself but its tide was stemmed by a few indefatigable crusaders of unflinching faith and ardent zeal. Endowed with religious devotion and enthusiasm, these pioneers and standard bearers saved millions in the *Ummah* through their sermons and exhortations, lectures and discourses, disciplines and teachings from being swept away by the flood of coarse materialism, they maintained the continuity of religious and spiritual traditions, teachings and precepts, which was assuredly much more important than the continued existence of political ascendancy Those who spearheaded the movement to fill in the gap at this crucial

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1 *Sahih Muslim*, Vol II *(Kitāb-uz-Zuhd)*, p 407.

moment in the life of the *Ummah* and thus saved the world of Islam from acquiescing in an utterly agnostic, characterless and spiritually enfeebled existence, were, Sa'eed ibn Jubair, Muhammad ibn Sireen, Sha'bi and, the precursor of all, Hasan al Basri. Born in 21 A.H. his father Yasār, was an emancipated slave of Zaid ibn Thābit, a celebrated companion of the Prophet, and he was himself brought up in the house of *Umm-ul-Momināin*, Umm-i-Salmah

Capabilities of Hasan al-Basri:

Hasan al-Basri had been gifted with ennobling virtues and brilliant capabilities essential to make his exhortation for revival and renovation of Islam effective in his times He was distinguished for a disposition, amicable and considerate, winsome and enchanting, on the one hand, as also for his erudite and profound learning tempered with prudence and wisdom, on the other. In his knowledge of the Qur'ān and the Traditions he excelled all the doctors of his time. He has had the opportunity of being an associate of the companions of the Holy Prophet. It seems that he was also a keen observer of the contemporary events and the transformation Islamic society was undergoing; for, he was fully aware of the ills, deficiencies and mal-practices that had crept in among the different sections of the society, and the measures necessary to eradicate them. He was also an equally celebrated orator inspired by deep ethical feeling. He held his audience spellbound. Whenever he discoursed on Hereafter or depicted the bygone age of the companions of the Prophet, everyone was seen brimming with tears Hajjāj ibn Yūsuf is rightly renowned for his eloquence but Hasan al-Basri was considered to be an equally good elocutionist. Abū 'Amr ibn al-'Alā', the famous grammarian and lexicographer says that he had not seen orators of greator eloquence than Hasan al-Basri and Hajjāj ibn Yūsuf but Hasan was more elegant speaker than Hajjāj[1] Of his encyclopaedic knowledge Rabī' ibn Anas says that he has had the

1 *Al-Bustān*, Vol VII, p 44

privilege of being closely associated with Hasan al-Basri for ten years and almost everyday he found something new not heard of earlier in the discourses of Hasan[1] Describing the scholarly attainments of Hasan al-Basri, Abū Hayyān at-Tauhidī quotes Thabit ibn Qurrah

> "In his learning and piety, forbearance and temperance, candour and large-heartedness, sagacity and prudence he resembled a bright star He was always surrounded by students seeking instruction in different branches of learning. He would be teaching *Hadith* (Traditions of the Prophet) to one, *Tafsīr* (explanation or commentary on Qur'ān) to another, *Fiqah* (laws and theological rules) to a third, expounding a legal opinion to someone else and imparting instruction in the principles of jurisprudence to yet another while continuing his sermons in the meantime for those who came to him for the purpose His knowledge covered an expanse as vast as an ocean, or, he was like a dazzling lustre illuminating every soul around him. What is more, his heroic efforts to enjoin the right and to forbid the wrong, his undaunted championship of the righteous path before the elite, rulers and administrators could never be forgotten "[2]

The reason why Hasan's words carried weight with his audience was that he was not simply a preacher or an accomplished orator but that he also possessed a sublimated soul. Whatever he said was heart-stirring because it came from the depth of his heart, his speeches had a magnetism which no other scholar or mentor of Kufa and Basra could emulate Another distinguishing feature of his sermons was their affinity to the prophetic homilies

Al-Ghazali has written in *Ihya' 'Ulum id-Din* that there is a consensus of opinion that the teachings of Hasan bore a close resemblance with prophetic discourses as did his own conduct

1 *Al-Bustānī*, Vol VII, p 44
2 *Ibid*, p 5

with that of the companions of the Prophet—a quality which was lacked by other guides and missionaries.[1]

The enthusiastic devotion people paid to Hasan al-Basri and the irresistible attraction they felt towards him were the hall mark of his charming personality He was rightly considered as one of the few top-most guides of the *Ummah*. Thabit ibn Qurrah, a non-Muslim philosopher of the third century (A. H.), was of opinion that of the few eminent personages produced by Islam who could rightly be envied by the followers of other faiths, one was Hasan al-Basri. He adds that Mecca had always been a centre of Islamic piety and learning where accomplished scholars in every branch of learning converged from all parts of the world but even Meccans were dumbfounded by his scholarly attainments as they had never seen a man of his calibre[2]

Sermons of Hasan al-Basri :

The discourses delivered by Hasan are reminiscent of the simplicity and moral grit of the Prophet's companions. Speaking of the transitory nature of the world and human life, these sermons stress the significance of the Hereafter and final retribution, develop the meanings of faith and righteousness, inculcate awe and reverence of God and denigrate self-indulgence and licentiousness. In an age of crass materialism, when the rank and file and many of the elite too had taken to the gratification of bodily and sensual desires a haranguing on these very subjects was required Hasan has had the opportunity of being an associate of the Prophet's companions and, therefore, when he compares the moral degradation of the later Ummayyad period with the simplicity and unflinching faith, moral and spiritual excellence of the earlier times, his description becomes graphic and forceful, sparkling with the fire of his own heart-felt sorrow at the degeneration of the *Ummah*; he castigates, chastises and lashes out at the revolting change. At the same

1 *Ihya'*, Vol I, p. 68
2 *Al-Bustān*, Vol VII, p 44.

time, the consummate diction, incomparable eloquence and unique lucidity of style secured for his sermons a distinguished place in the Arabic literature of the time Comparing the moral condition of his own times with that of the Prophet's companions and delineating the Islamic ethics, he observes

"Alas, people have gone to rack and ruin through their own fond hopes and daydreams, they talk but do not act; knowledge is there but without endurance, faith they have, but no conviction, men are here, but without brains; a crowd here is, but not a single soul agreeable to one's heart; people come here simply to go away; they acknowledge the truth, then deny it and make things lawful and unlawful at their sweetwill Is your religion a sensual delight? If you are asked 'Do you have faith in the Day of Judgment?' You say: 'Yes' 'But, No, it is not so' I swear by the Lord of the Day of Requital that your answer is wrong Its' only beseeming for the faithful that he should be sound of faith and a man of conviction His knowledge entails forbearance as moderation is an adornment for the learned He is wise but soft-hearted, well-dressed and restrained in order to conceal his indigence, never prodigal even if a man of substance, charitable and compassionate to the destitute, large-hearted and generous in giving to the kinsfolk their due, strenuous and unflinching in providing justice to others; never crosses the prescribed limits in favouring his near and dear ones nor does he find fault or cull out the errors of those whom he dislikes A Muslim is indifferent to revilings and tauntings, frolics and sports, decrials and backbitings He never runs after what is not his right nor denies what he owes to others, never debases himself in seeking an apology nor takes delight in the misfortune or misdeed of others"

"Humble and submissive, devoted and enchanted, as a faithful is in his prayers, he is a messenger of cheer, his endurance is owing to the awe of God; his silence is for meditation and reflection; he pays attention for edification

and instruction; he seeks company of the learned for acquiring knowledge; keeps mum to avoid transgression; and if he speaks, he speaks to spread the virture. A Muslim is pleased when he acts virtuously; entreats forgiveness from the Lord when he goes astray, complains when he is aggrieved only to make up for the loss sustained; is patient and prudent when an illiterate joins issue with him; proves enduring when ill-treated, he is never unjust and never seeks succour or protection from anyone save God Almighty.

"Dignified in the company of their friends, praising God when they were left alone, content with the lawful gains, grateful when easy of means, resigned when in distress, remembering God Almighty among the indolent and craving the grace of God when among the pious. such were the companions of the Prophet, their associates and friends No matter what station they occupied in life, they were held in high esteem by their compatriots and, when they died, their spirit took flight to the blessed Companionship on High, as the most celebrated souls. O' Muslims, these were your righteous ancestors, but when you deviated from the right path, God Almighty too withheld his blessings from you. *Lo ![1] Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts, and if Allah willeth misfortune for a folk there is none that can repel it, nor have they a defender beside Him.*[2]

On another occasion commenting on those verses of *Surah al-Furqān*[3] which describe the characteristics of the faithful, he says of the companions of the Holy Prophet:

"When the first Muslims heard this call from their Lord, they immediately affirmed it from the depth of their responsive heart They surrendered themselves implicitly

1 *Ar-Ra'd*, 11

2 Al-Basri, pp 66-70

3. Twenty-fifth Surah of the Qur'ān.

to the Most High; their hearts and eyes, nay, their whole existence, lived under a constant consciousness of the omnipotent power of God Almighty. By God, when I saw them, I could discern from their faces that the unseen realities taught by revelation were not beyond the ken of their perception—as if they had perceived these realities through their senses They never indulged in futile discussions or vain quibblings. They had received a message from the Lord and accepted it.

"Allah has Himself depicted their character in the Qur'ān thus: *The (faithful) slaves of the Beneficent are they who walk upon the earth modestly*[1] . . . The word used here for the faithful is symbolic, according to the Arab lexicographers, of their humility yet full of dignity. Thereafter the Lord says: *And when the ignorant address them, they say: Peace.*[2] It means that they are disciplined and patient and they never answer the arrogant and foolish in the same coin. If anyone joins an issue with them, they do not lose their temper or patience. They spend their days in acquiring knowledge from the learned. As for their nights, God has Himself spoken highly of what they do after the nightfall: *And who spend the night before their Lord, prostrate and standing.*[3] Verily, these bondsmen of Allah used to pass the whole night in prayers; they stood, tears flowing from their eyes, and then fell prostrate before the Lord, trembling with His awe. There was something, afterall, which kept them in vigils throughout the nights and made them yield to an implicit submission. The Almighty says that these are the persons who say: *Our Lord! Avert from us the doom of hell; lo! the doom thereof is anguish.*[4] The word signifying the torment of Hell in this verse is taken by lexicographers

1. *Al-Furqān*, 63.
2. *Ibid.*, 63.
3. *Ibid.*, 64.
4. *Ibid.*, 65.

to mean a chastisement or doom which never comes to a close i. e., it is an affliction which shall never end. I swear by Allah save Whom there is no other Lord, that the companions of the Prophet were really faithful; they acted on what they professed but, alas, you are after your fond hopes. Friends, do not lean upon your airy hopes, for God has never bestowed anything whether of this world or the Hereafter, upon anyone simply because he had longed for it."[1]

Thereafter he said (as he often used to remark after his discourses) that although his sermons lacked nothing, they were of little utility for the people who had lost the warmth of their hearts.

Fearlessness:

Hasan al-Basri was as much distinguished for his moral courage and unfaltered pursuit of justice as he was in the domain of erudition and oration He opposed the then Caliph, Yazīd ibn ᶜAbdul Malik,[2] in his presence when once someone asked Hasan to express his opinion about the two insurrectionists, Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab and Ibn al-Ashᶜath. Al-Hasan replied: "Don't be a party to the either faction". A Syrian, springing upon his feet, repeated the question "And not even to *Amīrul-Mominīn*?" Hasan replied angrily:" Yes, not even to *Amīr-ul-Mominīn*".[3] The intolerable and ferocious cruelty of Hajjāj ibn Yūsuf[4] is

1. Al-Marwazi, p 12
2. He succeded ᶜUmar ibn ᶜAbdul ᶜAzīz and ruled from the middle of 720 to January, 724 A D.
3. *Tabqāt*, Vol. VII, pp. 118-119.
4. Hajjāj, at one time governor of Hijaz, was ᶜAbdul Malik's Viceroy over Iraq, Sijistan, Kerman and Khurasan Being one of the most ardent supporters of the Ummayyads, he did everything to strengthen their Caliphate His cruelty gave rise to several furious revolts During his long rule over Iraq, he put to death nearly 1,50,000 men, many on false charges, and some of them were the best of Arab race At the time of his death, 50,000 people were found rotting in his prisons.

proverbial but Hasan did not hold his tongue from expressing what he considered to be right and just even during the rule of Hajjāj.

Hypocrites:

The lightning success of the Muslim arms and the complete political domination of the Ummayyads over an extensive area had given rise to a class which had embraced Islam for the sake of material gains but had not been able to translate the ethics and precepts of Islam in its everyday life These people had still to go a long way to ENTER IN ISLAM COMPLETELY as the Qur'ān demands of every Muslim The younger generation of the Muslims, too, lacked education and training, who had inherited many customs and usages of the pagan past. They had accepted Islam but not surrendered themselves implicitly to the guidance of the revelation in their daily affairs, modes of living, deeds and morals. Quite a large portion of the Muslim society, particularly its elite and the ruling circles had gradually adopted the ways of *Jahiliyah* and, since they held the keys to political domination, riches and position of influence, they were emulated by the rabble of Basrah Self-indulgence, vanity, jealousy and lust for wealth and power were thus fast capturing the soul of the people

Some historians are of the opinion that *Nifāq* (hypocrisy) was a passing nuisance which had arisen owing to peculiar conditions obtaining at Madina during the time of the Prophet. They think that the mischief came to an end with the domination of Islam over paganism as the overriding ascendancy of the former left no room for any further struggle between the two. We find many a historian and commentator of the Qur'ān subscribing to the view that after a time there was no need for anyone to join Islam ostensibly but remain secretly disaffected, as the conditions had completely changed and people could openly make a choice between Islam and heathenism.

Those who hold this view, however, overlook the fact that insincerity is a human failing, as common and old as any other moral affection. It is not at all necessary that there should be

two contending forces of Islam and un-Islam to produce hypocrites who might follow the former whilst secretly opposing it. During a period of Islamic predominance too, there is very often a section which is not able to follow its tenets whole-heartedly; it claims to profess Islam but in the recesses of its mind and heart it has a lurking doubt whether Islam is really the sole repository of truth. Such persons do not possess enough moral courage to forsake Islam publicly, or, perhaps, the benefits they derive from the Muslim society or State do not allow them to renounce the religion in which they do not have an unflinching faith. These persons thus remain throughout their life, distracted and irresolute Expediency is the norm of such persons; in moral behaviour, selfishness, double-dealing, self-adornment, forgetfulness of the Hereafter, timidity before might and authority and eagerness to exploit the poor and the weak, they are lingering remnants of the hypocrites of earlier days referred to in the Qur᾿ān.

Indication of Hypocrites :

It is an achievement as well as a proof of Hasan al-Basri's insight that he could not only apprehend that hypocrisy still existed in the Muslim society but that it commanded considerable influence in the public life, especially amongst the ruling elite.[1]

1 Among the religious scholars of the later period, Shah Wali Ullah too subscribed to the view that hypocrisy is found in every age and that the existence of hypocrites is not a phenomenon peculiar to any particular time or place He believed hypocrisy to be of two types : hypocrisy in belief and hypocrisy in behaviour and morals The former is now not discernible or difficult to indicate owing to termination of the revelation after the final disseminator but the hypocrisy of behaviour and morals has been rampant ever since Speaking of his own times he says in *al-Fauz-ul-Kabīr* "Seek the company of the grandees and their associates if you want to see what hypocrites are like You will see that they prefer their own likings over the edicts of the law-giver In truth and reality, there is no difference between these persons and the fellows who personally heard the Prophet, yet practised hypocrisy All such persons act against the dictates of the law-giver after having ascertained the same, so on and so forth Rationalists too, who harbour many doubts in their hearts but forget the Hereafter, belong to the same category" (*al-Fauz-ul-Kabīr*, pp 13-14)

Someone asked Hasan if hypocrites were still to be found amongst the Muslims of those days His reply was

> "If hypocrites desert the streets of Basra, you will find it hard to live in the city "[1]

Hasan al-Basri meant that the majority consisted of those people who paid only a lip-service to Islam without allowing its precepts to take roots in the bottom of their hearts or translating its teachings into their moral behaviour. On another occasion he remarked -

> "Holiness be to God ! What hypocrites and self-seeking persons have come to have an upper hand in this *Ummah*" [2]

Hasan al-Basri's estimation of the then self-centered rulers who were least interested in Islam and the Muslims was perfectly correct

In his correct diagnosis of the canker eating into the body-politic of the *Ummah* lay the cogency of Hasan al-Basri's sermons and the call for reformation There were several outstanding pedagogues among his contemporaries but none could arouse the enthusiastic devotion of the people like Hasan His scathing criticism and denunciation of the degenerated state of society in fact shed light on the spirit and content of hypocrisy that had captured the soul of a large section of the populace Hypocricy was a malady fast taking roots in the Muslim society, Hasan elucidated the character, morals and behaviour of the hypocrites who could be seen in every walk of life—in administration, armed forces, business and trade For the prevalent vices were the lust for wealth and power and an utter disregard for final Retribution, Hasan gave himself up to the condemnation of these very evils and made people think of the eternal life after death With his gift of eloquence he vividly depicted the unseen realities which every hypocrite, indolent and prodigal wanted to be buried in oblivion

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1 Faryābi, p 68

2 *Ibid*. p 57

For the call, preachings and sermons of Hasan challenged, indicted and denounced the aims and objects, designs and ambitions, longings and fancies of the age, it became difficult for the then society to ignore or remain indifferent to his haranguing. Innumerable people returned a changed man after hearing the sermons of Hasan and offered earnest repentance for the life of licentioussnes and self-indulgence they had led previously ; they made solemn affirmation of loyalty and obedience to God for the rest of their lives Hasan would urge his listeners to imbibe a true content of the faith and prescribe measures for the eradication of their vices He spent full sixty years in religious preaching and moral uplift of the people. It is difficult, for obvious reasons, to estimate the number of persons who were reformed and spiritually redeemed during this period. ᶜAwwām ibn Haushab says that Hasan performed the same task for sixty years which prophets used to do among the earlier peoples.[1]

Death of Hasan al-Basri :

The immaculate sincerety, outstanding piety and the moral and spiritual excellence of Hasan al-Basri had earned the affection of everyone in Basra. When he died in 110 A. H., the entire population of Basra[2] attended his funeral which took place on Friday, so that for the first time in the history of Basra the principal mosque of the city remained empty at the hour of the afternoon (*Asr*) prayer.[3]

After the demise of Hasan, his disciples and spiritual proteges continued to disseminate the message of Hasan uninterrupted ; they invited people back to religion, to the unflinching submission to the Almighty and cognition of the final recompense on the Day of Requital After twenty-two years of Hasan's death ended the

1 *Al-Bustān*, Vol VII, p 44.

2 After Damascus, the capital of the Ummayyads, Basra was then the second largest city of the Islamic empire

3. Ibn Khallikān, Vol I, p 355.

rule of the mighty Ummayyads, giving place to the Caliphate of ʿAbbāsids who shifted the seat of the empire from Damascus to Baghdad.

Revolts Against Tyranny:

Along with the efforts directed towards propagation of the Faith and moral and spiritual renovation, attempts were also made, time and again, to re-organise the Caliphate in accordance with the political law of Islam and thus terminate the monopoly of political ascendancy enjoyed by the Ummayyads, and, later on by the ʿAbbāsids The Caliphate had unfortunately been organised by that time around such racial and tribal loyalties that no call to overthrow the established order could he effective unless it could also lay a claim to the noble lineage and was also backed by tribal fidelity. We, therefore, find that most of the persons who raised the banner of revolt against the Ummayyads and the ʿAbbāsids belonged to *Ahl-ul-bait*—people of the House of Muhammad—who could fire the much needed enthusiam for overthrowing the hated administration. Since they represented the religious urge for reform and renovation and also enjoyed the sympathy and support of the religious-minded people, they stood a fair chance to succeed in their enterprise.

After the massacre of Karbala[1] a number of descendants of the Prophet tried to bring about a revolution Husain's grandson, Zaid ibn ʿAli, attempted a rising against Hishām ibn ʿAbdul Malik which failed and Zaid was killed in 122 A. H. Imām Abū Hanīfa, founder of the Hanifite school of jurisprudence, apologised to Zaid ibn ʿAli for not being able to join in his expedition but contributed ten thousand *dirhams* for the army of Zaid[2] Thereafter

1. Husain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad and son of Caliph ʿAli, was massacred along with his followers on October 10, 680 A D. at Karbala by an Ummayyad detachment for not taking the oath of fealty to Yazid ibn Muʿawiyah The butchery caused a thrill of horror in the world of Islam

2. Al-Kurdri, Vol I p 55

another descendant of Hasan, Muhammad Zun-Nafs-az-Zakīyah (b. ᶜAbdullah al-Mahz b al-Hasan al-Muthanna b. Hasan b. ᶜAlī) raised the banner of revolt in Madīna while his brother Ibrāhīm ibn ᶜAbdullah rose against Mansūr in Basra. Imām Abū Hanīfa and Imām Mālik,[1] both founders of the schools of canon law, pronounced *fatwās* in favour of the validity of Ibrāhīm's claim to the caliphate and the former even extended financial assistance to him Imām Abū Hanīfa even dissuaded Hasan ibn Qahtaba, a general of Mansūr, from fighting against Ibrāhīm[2] These efforts were, however, also doomed to failure and Muhammad met with a heroic death at Madina on the 15th of *Ramadhan* 145 A H while Ibrāhīm was killed during the same year at Kufa on the 24th of *Zul-kaᶜāda*. All these efforts turned out to be a dead failure owing to the armed strength and well established rule of the Ummayyads and the ᶜAbbāsids, yet, they set an example for the later generations to rise in revolt against tyranny and injustice. Despite their failures, the strenuous and uninterrupted efforts made by these heroes of Islam who, instead of submitting to the inducements of wealth and power, preferred to shed the last drop of their blood for the cause of justice and righteousness, have handed on a torch to the posterity that will ever keep its glowing spirit bright.

Of the believer' are men who are true to that which they covenanted with Allah

(al-Ahzāb · 23)

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1 Imām Mālik advised the people of Madina to help Ibrāhīm even if they had taken the oath of fealty to Mansūr. (Al-Kamil, Vol V, p 214).

2 Some historians are of the opinion that the action taken by Mansūr against Abū Hanīfa was not owing to the latter's refusal to accept the post of Chief Cadi, but because of his taking sides with Ibrāhīm (Abū Hanīfa. p. 458)

CHAPTER III

THE TRADITIONISTS AND JURISTS OF ISLAM

The ʿAbbāsids :

The ʿAbbāsids were successors of the Ummayyads, not in political power alone, but also in the "this-worldly" attitude of life, hereditary and autocratic system of government, misuse of public funds for personal ends and rejoicing in the rounds of pleasure and dissipation If there was any difference between the two, it lay in the Arabian monopoly of high offices of the State under the former whilst under the later non-Arabs came to have an upper hand in the administration The vices peculiar to the Arabs under the Ummayyads had thus given place to the failings of the other nations The writ of the ʿAbbāsid rule ran over such an extensive area that once Harūn al-Rashīd remarked when he saw a cloud

> "Whereinsoever thou may rain, but a portion of the produce of thy shower will come back to me"

The annual income of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate, as estimated by Ibn Khaldūn, was more than 7,500 *kintars* (7,01,50,000 dinars or 31,50,00,000 rupees) during the reign of Harūn al-Rashīd and it had increased manifold by the time of Mamūn The wealth and prosperity of the empire caused an influx into the capital, from the most distant parts, of the servile classes like musicians and singers, poets and jesters, in pursuit of their vocation of providing recreation to the sovereign, princes and grandees as did all sorts of manufactures and artistic creations to please the men of taste [1] Annalists have preserved an account of the marriage of Mamūn which illustrates the wealth and opulence,

1 Al-Jahiz Vol III, p 91 and Vol V, 115

pomp and pageantry, fascination and pleasure, surrounding the ʿAbbāsid sovereigns:

> "Mamūn along with his family, courtiers, nobles, army and civil chiefs, personal attendants, bodyguards and the entire army remained as a guest of his Prime Minister, Hasan ibn Sahl, to whose daughter he was betrothed. Hasan entertained the whole company for seventeen days on such a lavish and gorgeous scale that even the meanest of the king's party lived like an aristocrat during the period. Upon the members of the King's household and chief officers of the State were showered balls of musk and ambergris, each of which was wrapped in a paper on which was inscribed the name of an estate, or a slave, or a team of horses, or robes of honour, or some other gift, the recipient then took it to the treasurer who delivered to him the property which had fallen to his lot. A carpet of surpassing beauty, made of gold thread and inlaid with pearls and rubies was unrolled for Mamūn. As soon as he was seated on it, precious pearls of unique size and splendour were again showered on his feet which presented a fascinating scene on the resplendent carpet".[1]

Some Preachers of Baghdad:

Amidst this life of dissipation and gay abandon there were a few inspired souls who, having detached themselves from all fascinations and immoral demeanours of the then society, had given themselves up to the propagation of the faith, self-purification, education and edification of the religious sciences. The life-long object of these mentors was to protect and fortify the spiritual content of the community's faith, to forge a link between the Creator and the created and to expound and elucidate the teachings of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. They upheld steadfastly the traditions of detachment, fearlessness and undaunted championship of the truth, for, the powers that be could neither

1 *Al-Manṣūr*, pp 156-57 also *see* Ibn Khallikān Vol I pp 258-59

purchase them nor force them to give up the task they had taken upon themselves. Their seminaries were indeed heavens of shelter and safety in a tumultuous ocean of blasphemous materialism, domains of peace and tranquility were these, no less extensive or effective than the temporal kingdoms of the day If the kings and sovereigns had control over the body and flesh of their subjects, the writ of these mentors put the souls of the people into their hands There are not a few instances when these men of God were able to hold their own against the most powerful emperors. Caliph Harūn al-Rashīd was once on an official visit to Raqqa when the celebrated traditionist ʿAbdullah ibn Mubarak happened to go there The entire population of the city came out to receive him and no body remained to attend the king The multitude was so great that a large number of persons lost their shoes in the throng A maid servant of the Caliph who happened to watch the procession from the balcony, enquired who the celebrity was? When she was told that he was a religious doctor, ʿAbdullah ibn Mubarak, from Khurasān, she remarked "Verily, kingship is his and not of Harūn who dares not go anywhere without guards and orderlies!"[1]

Baghdad of the ʿAbbāsid period manifested both the cross-currents, if on the one hand people of every calling and trade, desirous of fortunes and riches, amusement and gratification, had gathered in the city, there was also, on the other, a great influx of religious teachers and the taught from all over the world Baghdad had become such a great centre of the saints and the learned that the monographs and annals of the period give an impression as if none save the divines and pious souls lived in Baghdad and its environs resounded with the recollection and praise of Allah This atmosphere of piety and catholicity was due mainly to Sufyān Thauri[2], Fudhayl ibn ʿAyādh[3], Junaid

1 Ibn Khallikan, Vol II, p 238
2 d. 161/778
3 d. 187/803

Baghdadi[1], Maʿrūf Karkhī[2], and Bishr Hāfi[3] who had dedicated themselves to the propagation of the faith The moral rectitude and integrity of these masters, their kind-heartedness and sincerity, detachment and contentment, benevolence and readiness to make sacrifice for others had endeared them to all, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. They upheld and gave a practical demonstration of the Islamic morality with the result that countless Jews, Christians, Magians and Sabians who came into their contact embraced Islam[4]

The Two Urgent Problems:

It was imperative, truly at this juncture of Islamic history, to formulate and strengthen the norms of communal, social and political behaviour of the *Ummah*, in the same way as its moral and spiritual heritage had been protected and nourished in the past so as to ensure that Islam would ever continue to be the guiding light for coming generations, By that time the Muslim empire had become the most powerful and extensive kingdom of the day extending over almost the whole of Asia and parts of Africa and Spain in Europe New exigencies were arising as Muslims came into contact with the peoples in different lands; problems relating to business and cultivation, poll-tax and land revenue, customs and rites of their vassals and liegemen were awaiting to be solved in accordance with the *Sharʿah* and its jurisprudence. It was simply not possible to set aside or defer anyone of these questions since the Islamic State stood urgently in need of a detailed and satisfactory answer to each of these issues, else it would have adopted Roman or Byzantine laws, codes and regulations for the conduct of its administrative business. Any complacency on the part of the then *ʿulema* would have produced the same confusion and waywardness as can be witnessed today under the so-called

1 d 297/910
2 d 200/815
3 d. 227/841.
4 For details *see* Ibn Khallikān: Vol I, pp 247-51 pp 323-24, Vol II, pp. 127-28; Vol. III, pp 215-17 and Vol IV, pp 319-20.

present-day Islamic States The result might have been even more disastrous since the diffidence or negligence on the part of exegetists and traditionists at that crucial stage would have deprived the *Ummah* of its *raison d'etre* for thousands of years if not for all times to come. As a poet has said

"A moment's negligence makes the way a hundred years longer"

One of the two important problems requiring immediate attention was the collection and compilation of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet which had by then been taken down or committed to memory by a large number of traditionists spread all over the Islamic realm[1] The Tradition or the *Sunnah* was a major source of legislation as the details of the law were only hinted at or sometimes not explicity mentioned in the Qur'ān, and thus these constituted the only means of regulating the rules of conduct and safeguarding the Islamic character of the Muslim society In fact, the *Sunnah* comprises a minute record of twenty-three years of the Prophet's apostleship, transmitted by his companions, relatives and friends—the eye-and ear-witnesses. It is also a distinction not enjoyed by any other prophet[2] Apart from its educational and doctrinal value, the *Sunnah* is a reservoir of guidance for moral rectitude and spiritual uplift, of reverence

1 The collection and compilation of the Tradition had actually been taken up by the successors of the companions of Holy Prophet The active interest taken by ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz has already been referred to in these pages In the second century A H there existed numerous compilations of which those of Ibn Shahāb Zuhri (d 124 A H), Ibn Juraih Makki (d 150 A H), Ibn Is'haq (d 151 A H), Saʿeed Ibn Abī ʿArūba Madni (d 156 A H), Muʿmar Yamani (d 153 A H) and Rabʿī ibn Sabih (d, 160 A H) were more celebrated It was then necessary to subject to most minute scrutiny, classify and interpret the Traditions in accordance with the carefully determined norms of criticism

2 In so far as the Prophet enjoyed Divine guidance to give authoritative declarations on questions, moral, social or doctrinal, his Traditions really constitute a record of inspired sayings, and consequently occupy a totally different position to what is commonly understood by traditions in the Christian Church

and awe of God, of infusing people with a dynamic energy to fight the evil; and, it shall ever be producing standard-bearers who will fill the people with the true content of faith, enthusiasm and self-confidence, bring the people back to the fountainhead of Divine guidance and enable them to erase the accretions, deviations and innovations to their beliefs and practices

The other need of the hour was to collect, systematise and make analogical deductions in consonance with the teachings of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*, to answer all possible questions of a sacred or secular nature The Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* provide, undoubtedly, guiding principles which can be applied to every stage of social and intellectual development of human beings, but, life being ever on the move, change is indispensable for human progress And this is why *Ijtihād* or analogical deduction of legal opinions under the inspiration of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* had become unavoidable to meet the new situations and necessities of the then expanding Islamic community

Compilation of Hadith (Traditions):

A mention must here be made of the Divine arrangements made for safeguarding the Traditions for God Almighty had selected for it a nation reputed for its memory, veracity and fidelity, whatever the companions of the Prophet saw or heard from him, they preserved the same with utmost care and transmitted it to the succeeding generations The memory of the prophets born amongst other peoples was preserved by the latter through sculpture and portraits but the companions of the Prophet of Islam, for whom representation in pictures and engravings had been prohibited, have left such a vivid and lively description of the appearance and deportment of the Prophet which not only dispenses with the need of picturisation but is also free from all its vices

Assiduity of the Traditionists:

Again, God Almighty provided Islam with hundreds of earnest scholars, peerless in prodigious memory and

intelligence, industry and enthusiasm, erudition and scholarly attainments, for the cultivation and development of the science of Tradition A large number of these, belonging to the non-Arab stock and coming from distant lands, set off on extensive travels all over the Islamic world in quest of the Traditions Indifferent to everything else, they devoted themselves to attending the lectures of the great doctors of theology and planning their work for collecting the Prophet's sayings and traditions about his acts and doings No other science, nor yet a people can claim to have had savants as devoted and zealous, and, at the same time, as meticulous and trustworthy as were the traditionists They moved heaven and earth to hunt for the Traditions from every corner of the Islamic world al-Bukhārī set off on his errand at the age of 13 and went all the way from Bukhara to Egypt, Abū Hatim Rāzi says that he traversed 3000 *farsankh* (9000 miles) on foot and thereafter left counting the mileage; Ibn Haivan of Andalusia (Spain) attended lectures of the doctors of Tradition at Andalusia, Iraq, Hijaz and Yaman wading through the whole of North Africa from Tanja to Suez and then across the Red Sea to Yaman A large number of traditionists have left accounts of their travels covering Asia, Africa and Europe (Spain).[1] As a matter of fact, it was not uncommon in those days to tread from Andalusia in Europe to Khurasan in Central Asia for the sake of acquiring knowledge from the reputed doctors of theology in different cities

Dictionary of Biography:

These savants did not simply collect and compile the Traditions but they also made researches in regard to the narrators of the Traditions, their integrity, truthfulness, moral and spiritual excellence In this way an account of the lives of all those transmitters of the sayings or doings of the Prophet, who had had the promise of "an exalted fame" by the Lord, came to light All these hundreds of thousands narrators became known to the

1 *Ulma-i-Salaf*, pp 20/22

posterity since they had handed down a Tradition or part thereof, thereby bringing into existence another science known as *Asma'ur-rijāl*. This branch of knowledge is a living monument of the deep erudition and scholarly attainment, bent for research and the sense of responsibility, intellectual acumen and lofty idealism of the people inventing it. In truth and reality, the *Ummah* can rightly feel proud of their achievement. In his introduction to Hafiz Ibn Hajar's *al-Isābah-fī-Tamīz-is-Sahābah* Dr. A Sprenger has paid a glowing tribute to the savants of the Traditions:

> "The glory of the literature of the Mohammadans is its literary biography. There is no nation, nor has there been any which like them has during twelve centuries recorded the life of every man of letters. If the biographical records of the Musalmans were collected, we should probably have accounts of the lives of half a million of distinguished persons, and it would be found that there is not a decennium of their history, nor a place of importance which has not its representatives."[1]

Trustworthiness of the Traditionists:

The traditionists did not simply narrate the biographical accounts of the transmitters of Traditions, they took every conceivable care to record absolutely authentic memoirs in regard to the character and disposition, integrity and prudence, knowledge and retentive memory of the narrators. They gleaned all available information about the narrators gathered from their contemporaries, without any partiality, fear or favour, no matter whether the narrator was a pious and illuminated soul or a ruler. One of the annalists says:

> "The matchless courage exhibited by the traditionists in subjecting the narrators of Traditions to an impartial and close scrutiny can justly claim a pride of place in the annals of Islamic peoples. There were numerous caliphs and commanders noted for their despotism,

1 Sprenger: Vol 1, p 1

among the narrators, but the Traditionists assigned them that very rank which they deserved. Imām Wakᶜee was a reputed Traditionist but his father was a treasurer under the employ of the State. Therefore whenever Wakᶜee had an occasion to relate a Tradition handed down by his father, he accepted the same if it was supported by another reliable narrator and rejected it if nobody in support of his father was to be found. Such a conscientious and cautious lot were these Traditionists."[1]

Masᶜūdī was a Traditionist. He was paid a visit in 154 A. H. by another traditionist, Maᶜādh ibn Maᶜādh, but as the former took the help of his memoirs, Maᶜādh rejected his Traditions on the ground of his weak memory.[2] Maᶜādh was once offered ten thousand *dinars* simply for remaining silent in regard to the reliability or otherwise of a witness. He refused the offer contemptuously saying that he could not suppress an evidence.[3]

Retentive Memory of the Traditionists:

Most of the traditionists were the elite of Iranian and Turkoman stock, a robust, vigorous and resolute people with a strong retentive memory in whom an ardent desire for acquiring knowledge had been kindled by Islam. Like any other human faculty which grows strong or weak with its use or disuse, retentive memory too can be strengthened prodigiously. Memory is losing its retentive power these days owing to the easy access to printed material, and now-a-days many people would find it difficult to believe the wonderful feats of strong retentive memory performed in the bygone days. History bears witness to many an instance of unimpeachable veracity of prodigious retentive memory which is, however, by no means beyond human experience or unintelligible. The fact is that an aptitude for the subject of study combined with continued application and profound interest in it produces

1 Tahzīb, Vol. XI, p. 130

2 *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 211

3 *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, p. 431 and *Khutbāt-i-Madras*, pp. 59-60

such a proficiency as appears to be prodigious or rather an intellectual marvel to the un-initiated

When al-Bukhārī[1] arrived at Baghdad, the doctors there thought of a novel device to test his memory They selected ten scholars who were assigned ten Traditions each and told to relate these to al-Bukhārī after affixing the introductory portion of one Tradition to the text of another [2] Each of these persons narrated the Traditions as decided earlier and asked al-Bukhārī to give his opinion about their authenticity Al-Bukhārī's reply about every Tradition narrated before him was that he had no knowledge of it Those who knew the reason got a cue while unawares smiled at him After everyone had narrated the Traditions appointioned to him, al-Bukhārī addressed the first enquirer and rehearsed all the Traditions narrated by him seriatim with the correct introductory portions and their adjunct texts Thereafter he turned to each questioner and recounted his Traditions one by one Everyone was dumbfounded at his wit and prodigious memory.[3]

Popular Enthusiasm :

The selfless devotion and care with which the traditionists addressed themselves to the study of the Prophet's *Sunnah*, aroused a general awareness and enthusiasm among the masses in regard to

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1 Abū 'Abdullāh Muhammad ibn Ismā'il al-Bukhārī (810-870) was born at Bukhara When still a youth he undertook the pilgrimage and remained for some time in Mecca attending the lectures of great doctors of theology Then he set off on extensive travels which throughout 16 years took him all over Islamic Asia Of a large number of Traditions he had collected, he finally selected 7 275 texts applying the most minute scrutiny His collection, which is divided into 160 books is entitled *al-Jami' e al-Sahih* (The Genuine Collection) and considered as the first and most authoritative of the Sihāh Sittah (Six Genuine Books) Al-Bukhārī died in a village near Samarkand where his Tomb is a much visited place of pilgrimage

2 The introductory portion of a Tradition consists of the chain of narrators who saw or heard any saying attributed to the Prophet, while the text comprises the quotation of the Prophet's words

3 *Fatah-ul-Bari*, p 487

this branch of religious science People flocked to the lecture of the traditionists in thousands with an avid desire to benefit from these study circles It is related by the annalists that despite the huge crowds attending the lectures of the traditionists these meetings were more disciplined and tidy than the courts of the sovereigns

It is reported that the number of persons attending the lectures of Yazid ibn Harūn in Baghdad exceeded seventy thousand persons Caliph Muᶜtasim b'illāh once deputed a trusted councilor to report the number of persons attending the discourse of ᶜAsim ibn ᶜAlī, a traditionist who lectured in a grove in the outskirts of Baghdad His estimate of the attendance was one hundred and twenty-four thousand people Another annalist Ahmad ibn Jᶜafar says that when Muslim[1] came to Baghdad he convened a meeting at Rahbah Ghassān for dictating the Traditions Seven persons were appointed to repeat what Muslim dictated Apart from the persons who came to listen the discourse a large number took down the Traditions from Muslim The inkpots counted after the dictation was over exceeded forty thousand Another doctor of repute, Faryābī had to employ three hundred and sixteen persons to repeat his discourses to the crowd attending his lectures It is estimated that about thirty thousand persons attended his lectures of which ten thousand took down the notes of his dissertations[2] Al-Faribri reports that ninety thousand persons heard al-Jamᶜe al-Sahīh personally from al-Bukhārī[3]

Sihah Sittah :

Unprecedented popular enthusiasm, devotion and ardent desire for the cultivation of religious sciences was helpful in securing an authentic and trustworthy collection of the Traditions which is undoubtedly a valuable asset and a storehouse of guidance

1 Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj (819-874) was compiler of one of the six canonical collections of *Hadith* called *al-Sahīh* *Muslim's Sahīh* and al-Bukhārī's work of the same title are the two most generally used of six most authentic collections of Traditions

2 *Ulma-i-Salaf*, p 68.

3 *Fath-al-Bari*, p 492

for the *Ummah* Among the compilations of *Sunnah*, *Sahīh ul-Bukhārī* of al-Bukhārī and *Sahīh Muslim* by Muslim are held to be of undisputed authority, and the Traditions accepted by both are known as the "agreed ones" signifying a high degree of reliability [1] Other works, held in high esteem but taking their place after the collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, are *Muwatta* of Imam Mālik (d. 179 A H), Jamᶜè of Imam Tirmizī, *Sunan-i-Abū-Dāʾūd* of Abū-Dāʾūd Sijistanī (d 275 A H) and the collections of Abū ᶜAbdur-Rahmān an-Nasaʾi (d 303 A H) and Abū ᶜAbdullah Muhammad ibn Mājah (d 273 A H) All the later movements for reformation and regeneration in Islam owe their existence to the endeavours made by the traditionists as no effort can succeed even now without drawing inspiration from these beacons of light

Compilation of Jurisprudence :

Like the Traditions, the codification of canons regulating the public and private life, amplification of the *corpus juris* and deduction of the rules for giving decisions in legal matters were the problems to be tackled immediately Islam had set foot on far off lands of Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Iran and other countries where its impact on local habits, customs and usages had given rise to many complicated problems Now, in order to solve these problems in consonance with the spirit of Islam, it required a deep knowledge of the conditions obtaining in these countries, customs and traditions of the different sections of society, patterns of human behaviour, a penetrating intellect and prudence along with a command over the Islamic lore, the Qurāʾn and the *Sunnah*, history and lexicon of the Arabs

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1 Shah Wali Ullah writes in *Hujjat-Allah-il-Baligha* "Traditionists agree that all the connected Traditions reported to have been related or performed by the Prophet himself and reported in these two collections are undisputedly correct for the chains of narrators given in these books are complete Anyone who denigrates these compilations is an apostate and a dissenter" (*Hujjat*, Vol I, p 133)

The Four Jurists of Islam :

Islam was fortunate to have been favoured again by God with paragons of intelligence and knowledge, earnestness and trustworthiness, who came forward for the service of *Ummah* in this field. Among these men of mark, the four founders of juristic schools, Nuʿmān ibn Thābit Abū Hanīfā (d. 150 A.H.), Abū ʿAbdullah Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179 A.H.), Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shāfeʿī (d. 204 A.H.) and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 A.H.), were highly esteemed scholars noted for their outstanding piety and service to the community, scholarship and understanding of legal matters. These savants dedicated their lives to the noble cause they had taken up, set up a tradition of contentment and resignation and turned their backs upon all the inducements of wealth, power and position. Abū Hanīfā twice refused the high office of Chief Justiceship offered to him by the then Caliph and was cast into prison where he died on account of the corporal punishment inflicted upon him. Mālik ibn Anas was flogged[1] so severely that his shoulder-blade got dislocated. Al-Shāfeʿī withdrew himself from the world, became indifferent to its concerns and led a life of self-abnegation and sublime asceticism resulting in irreparable loss to his health. Ahmad ibn Hanbal set his face against the official school of the then prevalent theology. He was tried before a court of inquisition and thrown into prison but he steadfastly held to the tradition of orthodox school. Each one of these jurists left voluminous treatises on law and legal dicta as can hardly be produced even through an organised effort. Abū Hanīfā is reported to have elucidated eighty-three thousand[2] juristic-theological issues of which thirty-eight thousand pertained to acts of devotion and prayer and

1. The point at the issue was whether the divorce given under compulsion is effective or not. The Caliphs in those days used to take the oath of fealty from the populace with an stipulation that if they broke the oath their wives would automatically be divorced. Imam Mālik's legal opinion that divorce given under compulsion was ineffective made the stipulation in the oath of fealty ineffective, thus causing a stir in the official circles.
2. *Zuhal Islam* Vol. II, p. 180 and *Al-Makki*, p. 96

forty-five thousand to transactions, rights and duties owed by one Muslim to another Another authority, al-Kurdari, writes that the total number of Abū Hanīfā's legal opinions was six lakhs [1] *Al-Mudawwanah*, the collection of religious and judicial sentences of Mālik ibn Anas, contains thirty-six thousand decisions [2] The collection of writings and lectures of al-Shāfeʿī known under the title of *Kitāb al-Umm*, runs into seven bulky volumes The decisions of Ahmad ibn Hanbal were compiled by Abū Bakr Khallāl (d 311 A H) in forty volumes [3]

Disciples of the Four Jurists :

The founders of Juristic schools luckily got successors and disciples who not only compiled and edited the compositions of their masters but also made improvements and additions to them Among the alumni of Abū Hanīfā was Abū Yūsuf, an eminent legal brain and Chief Justice of Harūn al-Rashīd, who produced a treatise of great erudition like *Kitāb ul-Khirāj* on the principles of Islamic economy. His other disciples included illustrious writers and jurists of Muhammad and Zufar's fame who firmly established and popularised the Hanafite school of jurisprudence ʿAbdullah ibn Wahāb, ʿAbdur-Rahman ibn al-Qāsim, Ash'hab ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz, ʿAbdullah ibn Abd al-Hakam, Yahiya ibn Yahiya al-Laithī were disciples of Mālik ibn Anas, who propagated the Māliki system in Egypt and North Africa. Al-Shafeʿī was fortunate to have Buwaiti, Muzani and Rabʿī as compilers, editors and codifiers of his legal decisions Ibn Qudāmah, a research scholar and accomplished writer, was the principal pupil of Ahmad ibn Hanbal He wrote a celebrated book entitled *al-Mughni* which occupies a pride of place in the Islamic juristic works

Advantages of Fiqah :

The fact that jurists of redoubtable scholarship were born in the first few centuries of Islamic era bespeaks of the vitality and

1 Al-Kurdari, p 144

2 *Zuhal Islam* Vol II, p 215

3 Shazrāt, Vol II, pp 261-62

inherent capability of the *Ummah* The endeavours of the jurists supplied a frame-work for manifestation of the Islamic ideals of ethical precepts in day-to-day affairs of the people and protected them from intellectual confusion and social anarchy which has brought many nations to wrack and ruin in their initial stages The jurists founded the Islamic legal system on a firm ground and formulated its canons in such a way that it could always solve new problems confronting the *Ummah* in future and provide a pattern of behaviour in consonance with the spirit of Islam

CHAPTER IV

AHMAD IBN HANBAL

Metaphysics :

Muslims became conversant with the Greek intellectual patrimony in the beginning of the second century A. H. The philosophical thought of the Greeks was nothing more than an intellectual sophistry and a play upon words devoid of any content of reality The concepts and ideas of man, limited as they are, find expression in his language which is wholly inadequate to delineate the nature and attributes of the Limitless Being The nature of God, His attributes, His creativeness, and similar other questions do not admit of an analysis and experimentation similar to those of tangible objects nor yet of a rational explanation, if only, because man does not possess the rudimentary knowledge or the basic precepts and experiences in regard to these matters, while the entire structure of his thoughts, ideas and imagination rests on sensory perceptions. Divine revelation through His apostles is, in reality, the only means of acquiring knowledge with certitude in this respect, for it can alone provide mankind with the gnosis of Supreme Being and His attributes Trust in the prophets, therefore, bespeaks of prudence and sound intellect. Muslims possessed the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* which provided an answer to all intellectual and spiritual questions and left no excuse for plunging into philosphical speculations. The companions of the Prophet, their successors, jurists and traditionists had all taken the same stand Also, Muslims were in the beginning too much occupied with the dissemination of their faith, the conquests that had brought to the fore numerous problems relating to affairs of private and social

life which had to be patterned in accordance with the ethical norms of Islam, and the compilation of religious sciences. However, with the translation of Greek and Syriac works and a close contact with the scholastics, philosophers and scholars of other peoples, a section of the Muslims began to take interest in the so-called rational and intellectual interpretation of the revealed truth. These people, not content with a realistic and direct answer available in the Scriptures to the spiritual questions, which was in fact more satisfying to an intellect, deep and well-grounded, were attracted by the sophism of philosophical speculation. And the result of their endeavours was that futile controversies pertaining to the nature and attributes of God, eternal or accidental nature of His word, vision of God through corporeal eyes, predestination and free-will were started, although these were neither necessary for theological purposes nor had any utility for cultural or social advancement. These discussions had definitely a dissolving influence on the solidarity of the *Ummah* and were injurious to its grit and tenacity.

Muᶜtazilaism :

The Muᶜtazilites, at the head of this group of religious philosophers, were regarded as rationalists and dialecticians since they had made philosophical speculation a touchstone of faith and apostasy. They endeavoured, with all the wits at their command, to reconcile religion with philosophy, faith with the so-called reason, while jurists and traditionists, on the other hand adhered to doctrinal tenets of their predecessors and considered these quibblings not only futile but harmful for the *Ummah*. *ᶜItizāl* did not take root till the reign of Harūn al-Rashīd but in the time of Mamūn, who was very much impressed with the Greek thought and its rationalism owing to his upbringing and for certain other reasons, the star of the Muᶜtazilites rose on the horizon. Ibn Abī Duwād an ardent propagator of *ᶜItizāl* and the Chief Justice of the ᶜAbbāsid Empire, exterted his influence to make it a state religion. Mamūn, who was himself a zealous exponent of the Muᶜtazilite school, had the impatience of a youth and the

obstinacy of an autocrat sovereign[1] He made it possible for the Muʿtazilites to exercise undue influence over the whole empire

The doctrine of the creation of the Qur'ān[2] was held as the basic tenet of the Muʿtazilite school which was sought to be enforced by invoking the power and influence of the state, and was made a criterion for determining one's apostasy or adherence to the true faith This brought forth a vehement opposition from the traditionists with Ahmad ibn Hanbal spearheading the opposition movement

Ahmad ibn Hanbal :

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was born at Baghdad in the month of of Rabīʿ ul-Awwal, 164 A. H He came of an Arab tribe, 'Shaiban,' which was renowned for its courage and endurance, grit and vigour[3] His grandfather, Hanbal ibn Hilāl had

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1 A few examples of his rashness are furnished by his declaration of the preferance of ʿAli over the first three Caliphs and of the validity of marriages contracted for a limited period which caused considerable resentment among the masses He had afterwards to retrace his steps on the intervention of Yahya ibn Aktham (*Zuhal Islam*, Vol III, p 165 and *Ibnū Taifur*, p 45)

2 The controversy in a regard to the creation of Qur'ān—its being created or being eternal—was entirely a philosophical speculation, which, even according to the Muʿtazilite historians, served only to shake the faith in the divine origin of the Qur'ān Traditionists, holding the interpretations of the Muʿtazilite school to be wrong and harmful for the *Ummah*, opposed them The Muʿtazilites are commonly regarded as rationalists and progressive but they proved to be the most turbulent sectarians since they endeavoured to stifle all opposition to their creed They filled the entire world of Islam with a rancour and fanned the flame of hatred between different sections of the populace The manner in which they dealt with their opponents is reminiscent of the courts of Inquisition set up by the Christian Church during the Medieval Ages for the repression of the liberal thinkers, and which ultimately gave a death blow to ʿItizāl.

3 The famous Commander of Caliph Abū Bakr, Muthanna ibn Hāritha belonged to the same tribe

migrated from Basra to Khurasan and was appointed as Governor of Sarakhsh under the Ummayyads but he was sympathetic to the ʿAbbāsid propaganda to supplant Bani Hashim, the descendants of the Prophet, in place of the Ummayyads. After his father's death, his mother migrated to Baghdad where Ahmad was born Although placed in straitened circumstances, his mother took pains to provide him with the best possible education. Ahmad too, being at the end of his tether, learnt to be industrious and patient, resolute and self-restrained He committed the Qur'ān to memory when still young, studied literature for some time and then enlisted in an office to gain proficiency in the penmanship

Ahmad was virtuous and of clear conscience from his very childhood His uncle held the post of an official reporter at Baghdad and used to send despatches to his superiors about the affairs of the city Once he handed over a bundle of his despatches to Ahmad for being delivered to a courier, but Ahmad threw these away in the river as he thought that these would be containing secret reports about certain persons While he was working as an apprentice in the correspondence-office, many house-wives whose husbands were out on military duty came to get their letters read out to them and replies written on their behalf Ahmad would oblige them but he would never write anything which he considered to be undignified or against the *Shariah* It was on account of these distinctive qualities that a foreseeing individual (Haitham ibn Jamīl) had predicted that if "the youngman remained alive, he would be a model for his compatriots"[1]

In religious sciences, Ahmad paid special attention to the Traditions In the beginning he took notes of the Traditions from Abū Yūsuf[2] and then studied for four years under a famous traditionist of Baghdad, Haitham ibn Bashīr[3] (d 182 A. H.).

1 *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 16

2 *Manāqib Imām Ahamd*, p 23

3 *Ibid*, p 23

During this period he also received education from ʿAbdūr Rahman ibn Mahdi, Abū Bakr ibn ʿAiyyāsh and a few other reputed teachers of *hadith* He was such an industrious and avid student that often he wanted to leave the home for his studies so early in the morning that his mother had to beg him to wait till the call for the morning prayer was heard and the darkness had at least faded away.

After completing his education at Baghdad he set out for Basra, Hijaz, Yaman, Syria and al-Jazirah for attending the lectures of the reputed doctors of Tradition in these places

Ahmad ibn Hanbal met Muhammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfeʿī in 187 A H while on his first visit to Hijaz[1] He again met al-Shāfeʿī afterwards in Baghdad when the latter had elaborated the science of jurisprudence into a regular system and developed the doctrine of *ijmʿā*. Ahmad had too acquired such a proficiency by then that al-Shāfeʿī used to depend on him in regard to the authenticity of the Traditions and often asked Ahmad to enlighten him in this regard

Ahmad wanted to set off for Ray in Iran for attending the lectures of a reputed traditionist, Jarīr ibn ʿAbdul Hamīd but could not go because of the paucity of funds He often regretted that if he had even ninety *dirhams* he would have left for Ray Another incident indicating his high-spiritedness in acquiring the knowledge of Traditions has been related by the annalists. In 198 A H he decided to repair to Hijaz and then, after performing the Hajj, to Sanʿā in Yaman for listening the Traditions from ʿAbdur Razzaq ibn Humām One of his class-mates, Yahyā ibn Maʿeen, also promised to accompany him However. when they were encompassing the Kaʿbah, they happend to meet ʿAbdur Razzaq ibn Humām. Ibn Maʿeen paid his respects to ʿAbdur Razzaq and introduced Ahmad to him' He also made a request to give them some time for learning the Traditions for him When ʿAbdur Razzaq had left, Ahmad told Ibn Maʿeen that it was not befitting for them to take advantage of the Sheikh's

1. Ibn Hambal, p 33

presence in Mecca to listen the Traditions from him. Although Ibn Maʿeen pleaded that it was a boon from God that the Sheikh's presence in Mecca had saved them from a lengthy journey of two months and the attendant hardships and expenditure, Ahmad refused to listen the Traditions from ʿAbdur Razzaq without having undertaken the journey to Sanʿa. He said: "I would feel ashamed before God, if I break the journey undertaken with the intention of learning the Traditions I would go to Sanʿa and attend the Sheikh's lectures there" After the Hajj was over, he repaired to Sanʿa and listened the Traditions handed down through al-Zuhri and ibn al-Mussayyib from ʿAbdur Razzaq.[1] In due course of time he acquired a high reputation for his profound knowledge, particularly for his erudition with respect to the precepts, actions and sayings of the Prophet, of which he could repeat over a million. Despite his vast knowledge and prodigious memory, he had a high regard for al-Shafeʿi's intelligence, grasp and deductive method of reasoning He used to say of al-Shafeʿi "I have not seen anyone like him". Ahmad learnt the rules of jurisprudence from al-Shafeʿi and later developed his own doctrine of uncompromising adherence to the text of the Traditions as a source of law Ultimately he rose to be an eminent theologian and jurisprudent, and the founder of one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence, which still has adherents in many parts of the Islamic world. Al-Shafeʿi too held Ahmad ibn Hanbal in high esteem While leaving Baghdad al-Shafeʿi had remarked "I am leaving Baghdad when there is none more pious and a greater jurist than Ahmad ibn Hanbal".[2]

Ahmad ibn Hanbal began his discourses on Traditions in 204 A.H, at the age of forty[3] This was perhaps God ordained or a re-echo of the Prophet's call to Islam since he had been graced with the prophethood at that age Quite a large number of persons used to attend his lectures Annalists report that five

1 Ibn-Kathir, Vol X, pp 326-27 and *Manāqib Imām Ahmad*, pp 69-70

2 *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 16

3 Ibn Hanbal, pp 33

thousand or more persons attended his lectures out of which about five hundred used to take down his discourses People listened to Ahmad ibn Hanbal in pin drop silence for no body could dare to talk or do anything unseemly of the respect of Traditions The poor were given preference over the rich in his lectures Al-Zahabi quotes Marwazi, a contemporary of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, as follows

> "I have not seen the poor and lowly being shown more deference anywhere than in the lectures of Ahmad, who used to be attentive to the poor and indifferent to the affluent He was a man of towering dignity, of simple habits yet grave and never hasty, his countenance signified a weightiness and sublimity. He used to arrive for his lectures after *Asr* prayers, but remained quiet till he was requested to speak"[1]

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was extermely simple in his habits and led an almost ascetic life like the mentors of the old He never accepted any gift or present offered by the Caliphs or the grandees If his sons ever asked the reason for refusing these presents, he explained that the offerings were perfectly lawful and even Hajj could be performed from that money He refused to accept these not because of it being prohibited but owing to the dictates of prudence He managed to meet his expenses from the income of his ancestral fief or from his own earnings but despite his being financially hard-pressed he was very large-hearted and generous He often said that if the entire world became a morsel in the hands of any Muslim who fed another Muslim with it, this would not be lavishness He was not charitable in respect of wealth alone but exhibited the same virtue even when his own-self was involved Once a man abused and denounced him but ---- came back to repent and offer his apology Ahmad replied that he had already forgiven him before leaving the place where the incident had occurred After enduring the tortures in connexion with his stand on the eternity of the Qur'ān, he forgave

1. *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 35, and *Hilyatul Auliya*, Vol IX, p 165

all those who were involved in his sufferings including the Caliph under whose orders he had been severely scourged He used to say "I cannot pardon the innovator in religion but excepting him everyone who took part in my victimisation has been pardoned by me" Often he said, "What advantage would anyone derive if a Muslim was a scourged in Hell because of him ?"

An incident illustrating the over-flowing charity and kindly disposition of Ahmad ibn Hanbal has been related by Ahmad Qattān al-Baghdādī who says that long after the wounds inflicted by the flogging had been healed, Ahmad ibn Hanbal often had a shooting pain in his back which was caused by a growth developed as a result of the severe scourging The physician who had treated Ahmad ibn Hanbal told al-Baghdādī that while examining Ahmad when he pressed the spot where the latter had pain, Ahmad simply said "I seek the refuge of God from it" Similarly, when the physician opened the spot to remove the concussion, Ahmad continued to seek forgiveness for Muᶜtasim till the operation was over After dressing the wound the physician asked Ahmad ibn Hanbal "Abū ᶜAbdullah, when people have to face a calamity on account of someone else, they normally accurse him but you were invoking divine blessings for Muᶜtasim ?" "I too thought of it", replied Ahmad, "but Muᶜtasim is a descendant of the Prophet's uncle and I do not want to cherish a feud with one of the relatives of the Prophet when I face him on the Day of Judgement I, therefore, decided to forgo my claim against him"[1]

Despite his high reputation and profound knowledge, never a word of self-praise was heard from him One of his associate, Yahyā ibn Maᶜeen says

> "I have not seen a man like Ahmad I had been associated with him for fifty years but he never showed off his erudition"[2]

1 *Raudha-tul-ᶜUqla*, pp 156-57

2 *Hilyatul Auliya*, Vol IX p 181

Modest as he was, Ahmad never liked to mention his lineage although he descended from a celebrated Arab tribe, and that was considered to be a great honour in those days Al-Zahabi has recorded an incident related by one of Ahmad's compatriots which throws light on his singular humility

> "ʿĀrim Abū-Noʿamān says. Ahmad ibn Hanbal had asked me to keep some funds in deposit out of which he used to draw amounts in accordance with his needs. Once I said: 'Abū ʿAbdullah, I know you are an Arab.' To this he replied · 'What! we are destitutes.' I insisted on a reply but he evaded the answer".[1]

After the persecution Ahmad ibn Hanbal had to undergo for his stand on the question of the creation of Qurʿān, he obtained so high a reputation for his sanctity that countless people offered prayers for divine blessings on him Ahmad ibn Hanbal, however, felt terribly worried and uncertain. Once Marwazi, one of his disciples, told him: "A large number of people solemnly invoke the divine blessings on you."

"How do you say so?", Ahmad exclaimed, "I actually fear punishment in the shape of divine benefits that are sometimes conferred on ungrateful sinners".

Marwazi replied, "A man has come from Tarsūs who says that he was present on a battle-field in Rūm[2] when he heard suddenly cries raised from every nook and corner of the place imploring benediction in your favour. He further relates that the soldiers fired ballistas as if on your behalf and once it so happened that when a ballista was thus fired, the missile hit an enemy taking position behind a cover on the wall of the fort, cleanly blowing away both the cover and the head of the enemy".

Horrified on hearing this, Ahmad exclaimed, "O God, let this not be a delusive favour from Thee.".[3]

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1. *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 22.
2. The land of the Byzantians.
3. *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 21

Very often non-Muslims came to meet him from distant places A Christian physician once visited him in connexion with his treatment He said, "I wanted to meet you since a long time. You are a blessing not for the Muslims alone but for all the human beings All of our friends and co-religionists have similar feelings for you"

When the physician had left, Marwazi said, "I hope that the entire Muslim world would be beseeching divine blessings for you".

Ahmad, however, replied, "When a man happens to know his worth, no adulation can deceive him "[1]

Notwithstanding his profound humility, Ahmad ibn Hanbal had been endowed with a personality so solemn and overbearing that even the state officials, administrators and soldiers felt over-awed in his presence and could not help paying respect to him An eye-witness reports that he had been to the Governor of Baghdad Is'haq ibn Ibrāhīm, and several other high-ranking officers but he did not find anyone so domineering as Ahmad ibn Hanbal. He says that he wanted to seek certain clarifications from Ahmad but he found himself in a flutter—the blood knocking in his temples, he was unable to speak in the presence of Ahmad. A reputed traditionist Ibrahīm al-Harbi (d. 285 A H.) says:

> "I have seen Ahmad ibn Hanbal. It seemed as if his heart was a repository of all the knowledge vouchsafed to human beings, past and present; he brought forth whatever he wanted and held back what he did not desire to divulge."[2]

Ahmad ibn Hanbal led a life so simple and frugal that it was envied even by the ascetics. The reign of the first three ʿAbbāsid sovereigns of his time, Mamūn, Muʿtasim and Wāthiq, constituted a trial for Ahmad since each one of these was bent on putting

1 *Tarjumatul Imām*, pp 21/22

2. *Ibid*, p 16, and *Manaqib Imām Ahmad*, p 15

him to harm. Wāthiq was succeeded by Mutawakkil in 232 A. H. who held Ahmad in high esteem, but Ahmad was far more afraid of him since he took the favours of the Caliph as a temptation to evil. Often he said that he was able to withstand the sufferings inflicted by the earlier Caliphs, but in his old age, he had to face another trial which was far more severe. The respect and deference, favours and gifts of Mutawakkil could not, however, make any inroad into the contentedness and resignation of Ahmad just as the threats and sufferings at the hands of earlier Caliphs had failed to deter him from the path enjoined by the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. Once Mutawakkil sent him a donkey-load of gold-pieces but he refused to accept the same. The man who had brought the present insisted on his accepting the money and implored that the Caliph would take ill if the present was refused. At last Ahmad consented to let the bag being placed in a corner. Ahmad, however, called on his uncle late in the night and asked him to advise as to what he should do with the money since he deeply regretted that he had accepted the present, and could not sleep on account of it. His uncle advised him to wait at least till the day-break and then to dispose it of in the manner he liked best. Early next morning Ahmad collected his trusted disciples and associates and asked them to prepare a list of the poor and indigent persons. He distributed the entire amount and then gave away the bag to a destitute.[1]

Ahmad ibn Hanbal remained a royal guest, on the insistence of Caliph Mutawakkil, for a few days. During this period he was served with sumptuous dishes, which were estimated to cost one hundred and twenty *dirhams* per day. Ahmad, however, did not touch the food and kept fasting continuously for eight days. He became too weak, and, as it is reported, if the Caliph had not sent him back soon thereafter, he would have probably died.[2] ʿAbdullah, Ahmad's son, says that his father remained with the Caliph for sixteen days. During this period he took only a little

1 *Tarjumanul Imām*, p. 60

2 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

parched grain reduced into paste Mutawakkil had sanctioned stipends for the sons of Ahmad. One of his sons reports that prior to their being stipendiaries, Ahmad had no objection to accepting anything from them but he completely discontinued the practice thereafter. Once, when Ahmad was ill, a physician prescribed water extracted from parched pumpkin for him. Ahmad was advised by someone to get the pumpkin parched in the oven of his son Saleh which happened to be burning at the time, but Ahmad refused to do so.[1] Although he was extremely cautious for his own self, he still felt uneasy in regard to the stipends received by his sons, and ultimately he told Saleh: "I want that you should foresake the allowance for you are getting it on account of me"

Ahmad fell seriously ill at the age of 77. The number of people who daily came to see him was so large according to the chroniclers of his time that all the streets of the Bazar near his house were overcrowded and police had to be posted there to control the traffic[2] Ahmad was suffering from haematuria and the reason attributed to his illness by the physicians was that grief and anxiety had produced an ulcer in his stomach[3] Marwazi says that Ahmad's condition deteriorated on Thursday. Although he had unbearable pain, Ahmad asked Marwazi to help him perform the ablution. He was so particular about it that he instructed Marwazi to pass his fingers between the toes On Friday night Ahmad's malady grew still worse and he died the next day, on Friday, the 12th of Rabīʿ-ul-Awwal, 241 A H[4]

Dispute regarding the Nature of the Qurʾān:

Caliph al-Mamūn applied himself vigorously to the task of spreading the doctrine of the Muʿtazilites about the nature of the

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1 *Tarjumatul Imām* pp 63/64.

2 *Ibid*, p 77.

3 *Ibid* p 77.

4 *Tarīkh-i-Kabīr*, Vol II, Part I, p 6; *Tarīkh-us-Saghīr*, p 244; and *Tarjumatul-Imām*, p 76

Qur'ān, who held it to be a creature rather than an eternal word of God In Mamūn's judgment, any deviation from this doctrine was worse than treason, and therefore, he issued a detailed mandate to the Governor of Baghdad in 218 A H severely criticising the dogmatism of the populace, particularly traditionists. He described them as noisy and turbulent sectarians lacking in true faith, unreliable witnesses and reactionaries of the *Ummah* He ordered that all those officials who did not subscribe to the tenets expounded by him should be dismissed under intimation to him [1]

The royal edict was issued four months prior to the death of Mamūn Its copies were despatched to the governors of all dominions who were instructed to summon the leading doctors and jurists, under the employ of the State, and to test them in the fundamentals of the doctrine and to dismiss those who did not accept the Mʿutazilite viewpoint

Thereafter Mamūn issued another order to the Governor of Baghdad asking him to present before him seven reputed traditionists of the city who were opposed to the doctrine [2] When they came, Mamūn questioned them about his dogma regarding the creation of the Qur'ān Each one of them, either from conviction or as a matter of expediency, expressed his agreement with the views of the Caliph and was allowed to go back. They were also asked to express their views in public meetings convened for the purpose but the masses remained unaffected, holding the orthodox view

A few days before his death, Mamūn issued a third rescript to Is'haq ibn Ibrahīm, expounding the doctrine in still greater detail, and enlarging its scope to test all the doctors of religion along with the officials of the State He made it compulsory for everyone to subscribe to the tenet Is'haq convened a meeting of all the reputed doctors, asked their views about the royal dogma and reported back their answers to the Caliph. Mamūn was in

1 Tabri, Vol X pp 284/93 and Ibn Taifūr pp 181/86

2 Ibn Taifūr, p 183

taken a vow that he would not execute him but have him most severely scourged and confined in a dungeon where the Sun never arose Ahmad, however, did not yield and ultimately he was brought before Muᶜtasim The Caliph ordered Ahmad to be given thirtyfour lashes A fresh executioner was brought after every two strokes but Ahmad said after getting each whip · "I will accept if you can bring anything from the Qurᶜān or the *Sunnah* in your support"

Ahmad's Account of His Sufferings :

Ahmad ibn Hanbal has himself given an account of his sufferings in these words ·

> "When I reached the place known as Bab-ul-Bustān, a horse was brought before me and I was asked to get upon it Nobody helped me in mounting the horseback and with heavy chains fastened to my legs, I had to make many attempts I just managed somehow to save myself from falling down in these attempts When I reached the castle of Muᶜtasim, I was thrown in a small room which was then bolted There was no lamp in the room and after midnight when I stretched my hands to touch the dust for purification before the prayers I intended to offer, I found a tumbler full of water and a basin I performed ablution and offered the prayers On the next day a page took me before the Caliph The Chief Justice, Ibn Abi Duwād, and a number of his courtiers along with Abū ᶜAbdur Rahmān al-Shafeᶜi were present there Just before I was presented before the Caliph, two persons had been beheaded I asked Abū ᶜAbdur Rahmān al-Shafeᶜi if he remembered what Imām al-Shafeᶜi had said about *Masah.*[1] Ibn Abi Duwād remarked on this · 'Look here ! This man is to be beheaded and he is making enquiries about the canons' In the meantime Muᶜtasim asked me to come

1 Ritual purification with dust in place of water, when the latter is not available or is harmful for health, for offering prayers

why do you want to get rid of your life. God knows that I have a great regard for you'.[1]

One, Ujaif, stroked me with the handle of his sword and exclaimed: 'You want to carry all before you' Another man remarked, 'Don't you see that the *Amīr-ul-Mominīn* is standing before you', while a third ejaculated, 'Oh, *Amīr-ul-Mominīn*, you are keeping fast and standing in the sun'. Muᶜtasim repeatedly beseeched me to acknowledge his dogma but every time, I repeated my earlier reply at which he flared up and ordered to scourge me harder till I became unconscious When I regained consciousness, I found that I had been unchained Someone present there told me that I had been pulled down on my face and then trampled upon However, I do not know what they had done to me"[2]

Firmness of Ahmad ibn Hanbal:

Ahmad ibn Hanbal was thereafter sent back to his house He spent 28 months in imprisonment and got 34 lashes Ibrāhīm ibn Musᶜab, one of the guards in whose custody Ahmad was kept, says that he had not seen anyone more courageous and brave than Ahmad, for he treated his guards no more than insects Another person, Mohammad ibn Ismaᶜīl, says that he had heard from certain eye-witnesses who said that Ahmad ibn Hanbal was scourged so severely that one stroke was enough to make an elephant cry out An eye-witness of Ahmad's scourging says that since the latter was keeping fast on the day, he said to him "The *Sharīᶜah* permits you to acknowledge the tenet of the Caliph in order to save your life But Ahmad did not pay any attention to me When he became too thirsty, he asked for some water A

1 The chroniclers of the time report that Muᶜtasim wanted to set Ahmad free, but Ibn Abī Duwād exhorted him and said that if the Caliph forgave Ahmad, his action will be construed as going back on the policy laid down by his brother

2 Summarised from *Tarjumatul Imām*, pp 41-49

tumbler of ice-cooled water was brought which he took in his hand but returned."[1]

One of the sons of Ahmad relates that his father had the marks of scourging on his body when he died. Abul ʿAbbās ar-Raqqi describes how certain people who wanted to save Ahmad of his sufferings, went to the prison where he was confined and recited the Tradition which allowed one placed in similar circumstances to save his life Ahmad replied, "But what do you say of the Tradition handed down by Khabbāb which says that there were people of the old who were sawed into two but they did not renounce their faith". Those people got disappointed with the reply of Ahmad for they knew that he would go through every trial and tribulation for the sake of his faith

Achievements of Ahmad ibn Hanbal :

The undaunted courage and steadfastness of Ahmad ibn Hanbal gave a death-blow to a sacrilege which had exposed the faith to a great danger. All those who had expressed their agreement, either from fear or expediency, with the views of the Caliphate, were exposed. All such savants were despised and held in contempt despite their erudition and learning On the other hand, Ahmad ibn Hanbal was received by the people with the most honourable marks of distinction, and affection for him became a mark and symbol of the orthodox school of Islam One of his compatriots, Ibn Qutaibah says :

> "When you find anybody setting his affections on Ahmad ibn Hanbal, you should know that he is a follower of the *Sunnah* "[2]

Another doctor, Ahmad ibn Ibrāhīm ad-Dauraqī held that

> "Be suspicious of the Faith of one whom you find irreverent to Ahmad" [3]

1 *Tarjumatul Imām*, p 112
2 *Ibid*, p 16
3 *Tarīkh-i-Baghdad* Vol IV p 420

CHAPTER V

ABUL HASAN AL-ASHARI

The Crisis of ʿItizāl :

Ascendancy of Muʿtazilites—The Muʿtazilites suffered a severe set-back after the death of Muʿtasim and Wathiq, both of whom were ardent supporters of their school Mutawakkil, the tenth ʿAbbasid Caliph, succeeded his brother Wathiq in 232 A. H. He was against the Muʿtazilites and keen for the restoration of the true faith He declared as heretic the allegedly free-thinking Muʿtazilites, expelled them from public offices and interdicted discussions on dogmatic questions by them. Yet, *ʿitizāl* had taken roots in the circles of the learned and the philosophers, all over the Islamic world Although the doctrine in regard to the creation of the Qurʾān had died-out, the Muʿtazilite thought still exercised considerable influence. The Muʿtazilites continued to be vigorous owing to the eminent exponents of *ʿitizāl* who were well-versed in literature, dialectics, jurisprudence and other sciences, and held high offices under the State They gained ascendancy by the middle of the third century A H when it was commonly held that they possessed rationalistic tendencies, were progressive thinkers and seekers after the Truth. This became the prevailing taste which was taken after by the youngmen, students and others who wanted to cut a figure. The Hanbalite school could not produce another savant of Ahmad ibn Hanbal's erudition while the traditionists and the teachers of orthodox school came to regard secular sciences as undesirable intruders into the domain of religion. The ignorance of orthodox theologians in dialectics and other secular sciences began to be regarded as their weakness with the result that the *ʿitizāl* acquired a predominance such as it had never gained before or after that period. It is true that all those

Abū ʿAli al-Jubbā'ī was a successful teacher and writer but not a good debator while Abul Hasan ʿAli al-Ashʿari was celebrated both for his wit and eloquence. During the debates on the doctrines of *ʿitizāl*, al-Jubbā'ī used to ask him to contend with the opponents of his school Thus he soon earned a name for his mastry over the science of disputation and was recognised as a teacher of the Muʿtazilite school of thought[1] It was expected that he would succeed his god-father and mentor and prove a still more vigorous and eminent exponent of the Muʿtazilite doctrines. God had, however, willed otherwise.

Notwithstanding the fact that al-Ashʿari had spent his life in the advocacy of the Muʿtazilite school whose leadership was about to fall in his lap, Providence had selected him to vindicate the *Sunnah*. He began to see through the intellectual sophistry of the Muʿtazilite school, its quibblings and hairsplitting, and ultimately realised that the specious reasoning of the rationalists was nothing more than an intricate yet well argued spell of words, ideas and thoughts but really inconsequential in so far as the search for Truth was concerned. It dawned upon him that the source of truth lay only in revelation; the way of the teachers of the old and companions of the Prophet was the only Right Path, and that there was no reason why intellect should not submit to it Thus getting disenchanted from the Muʿtazilite doctrines at the age of forty, he developed an intense dislike for the so-called rationalist school. He did not come out of his house for fifteen days. On the sixteenth day he went from his house to the principal mosque of the city. It was Friday and al-Ashʿari elbowed his way through the thronging crowd of the faithful. Going straight to the pulpit and ascending its steps he started to proclaim:

> "Many of you know me. I want to tell those who do not know me that I am Abul Hasan ʿAli al-Ashʿari. I was a Muʿtazilite and believed in their doctrines. Now I seek repentance from God and turn away from my earlier

1. *Tabʿeen*, p 117

beliefs, henceforth, I shall endeavour to refute the doctrines of the Mu^ctazilites and lay bare their mistakes and weaknesses"[1]

And from that day on al-Ash^cari devoted himself whole-heartedly to the repudiation of the Mu^ctazilites and began propounding the tenets of the orthodox school With his profound knowledge, penetrating intellect, eloquence, mastry over dialectics and a facile pen, he was able to over-shadow his disputants and uphold the doctrines of the conformist school.

Missionary Zeal of al-Ash^cari:

For he considered it an obligation and a mission enjoined by God Almighty, al-Ash^cari performed the task he had taken upon himself with an untiring zeal He used to attend the meetings of the Mu^ctazilites and search out rationalists to set at rest their doubts about the doctrines of the orthodox school If anyone raised the objection as to why he met the sceptics and dissenters, who ought to be shunned, he would reply that he could not do otherwise He explained that the Mu^ctazilites were all well-placed in life, held the offices of administrators, judges, and other venerable positions, and, therefore, they could not be expected to come to him If he too were to sit with folded hands, how would they come to know the Truth, and also that there was someone who could defend the faith with reason and arguments[2]

Achievements of al-Ash^cari:

Al-Ash^cari was a pastmaster of debates and polemics He had an aptitude and facility which he used with consumate skill in contending for the religion No one was better qualified than he for the task as in his knowledge of secular sciences like logic and dialectics he excelled all the Mu^ctazilite doctors and could rebut their objections like a teacher answering the questions of

1 *Tab^ceen*, pp 39-40 and Ibn Khallikān, Vol II, pp 446-447

2 *Tab^ceen*, p 116

his students One of his disciples, Abū ʿAbdullah ibn Khafīf has left an account of his first meeting with al-Ashʿari in these words:

> "I came from Shirāz to Basrā Being too keen to meet al-Ashʿari, I enquired of his address I went to his place at a time when he was attending a debate A band of the Muʿtazilites was then blurting out questions one after another After they had all finished their haranguing, al-Ashʿari began his speech He took the objections raised by each, one by one, and set at rest all of their doubts When al-Ashʿari rose from the meeting, I followed him. He asked, 'What do you want?' I replied, 'I want to see how many eyes, ears and tongues have you got' He smiled on hearing my answer"[1]

The same narrator adds

> "I could'nt see why you kept quiet in the beginning' said I, 'and allowed the Muʿtazilites to present their objections It behoved you to deliver lectures and meet their objections therein, instead of asking them to speak out first' Al-Ashʿari replied, 'I do not consider it lawful even to repeat their doctrines and beliefs, but once someone has expressed these, it becomes an obligation for the righteous to refute their tenets' "[2]

Abul Hasan ʿAli al-Ashʿari was the founder of Islamic scholasticism (*kalām*) All the dialecticians of the later ages have acknowledged al-Ashʿari's God-gifted intelligence and sagacity, discernment and profundity Cadi Abu Bakr Baqillāni was known to his compatriots by the name of *Lisan-ul-Ummah* (Tongue of the Nation), on account of his eloquence and penmanship Once, when somebody remarked that his writings appear to excel those of al-Ashʿari, Baqillāni replied that he considered it an honour to be able to understand al-Ashʿari's works[3]

1 *Tabʿeen*, p 95
2 *Ibid*, pp 95-96
3 *Ibid* p 126

way unauthorised by God Almighty. Their interpretation is neither supported by reason nor by the Traditions handed down from the Prophet, his companions or their successors."[1]

Thereafter, throwing light on the canons of his own school of thought, he says :

"We have a faith in the Qur'ān and the Traditions and, therefore, hold the opinion that these have to be followed ungrudgingly. What has been handed down by the companions, their successors and traditionists has to be accepted completely and with unquestioning submission, for this is the way of Ahmad ibn Hanbal (may God bless him and give him a goodly reward by raising him to higher and sublime regions). We shun those who do not follow the path of Ahmad, for, he was the *Imām*, pious and erudite, whom God Almighty enabled to show the path of righteousness and efface the deviations and innovations, doubts of the sceptics and interpretations of the misguided. May God glorify the adorable and venerable *Imām*."[2]

The achievement of al-Ashᶜarī, however, did not consist merely of his defence of the orthodox school, for the Hanbalites and other traditionists had already been seized with the task. The most valuable accomplishment of al-Ashᶜarī was the formulation of principles which enabled the tenets of the orthodox school to be accepted in the light of reason, i. e. on the basis of logical arguments. He examined the doctrines of the Muᶜtazilites and other sects in accordance with the principles of logic and the philosophical terminology evolved by these sects, and brought out their mistakes so as to uphold the beliefs and tenets of the orthodox school.

Al-Ashᶜarī earned the displeasure of the Muᶜtazilites and other misguided sects, natural and inevitable as it was; but he was also criticised by those rigid Hanbalites and traditionists who

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1 *Kitāb-ul-Ibānah*, p 5

2 *Kitāb-ul Ibānah*, p. 8

considered it a sin to discuss the issues raised by the rationalists or to use the philosophical terms for elucidating the tenets of the faith in the light of reason

Al-Ash^cari maintained that the ultimate source of faith and the key to metaphysical realities were revelation and the teachings of the Prophet rather than human reason, speculation or Grecian mythology. At the same time, he disagreed with the rigid dogmatism of the conformists who thought it prudent to keep quiet about the issues raised by the misguided sects simply because the Traditions handed down from the Prophet did not mention their terminology. Al-Ash^cari held the view that this attitude would be reckoned as a weakness of the orthodox school and would ultimately be harmful to it Al-Ash^cari also maintained that the attitude of the rigid dogmatists would enable the Mu^ctazilites and other misguided sects, through their apparent endeavour to reconcile faith with reason and religion with philosophy, to attract the young and intelligent who were not content to be driven in a common groove. He agreed with the orthodox view that revelation and prophethood were the only sources to be depended upon in so far as the faith was concerned—a view diametrically opposed to the Mu^ctazilites and the philosphers—but it was not only lawful but absolutely necessary or even obligatory to take recourse to the logical deduction and prevalent philosophical terminology for evincing the religious tenets. He maintained that it was not at all necessary to avoid the issues pertaining to perception or intellect, which were ultimately grounded in human experience but had unnecessarily been made a part of religious doctrines by the rationalists, in order to prove or disprove the latter with the help of a clever play upon words At the same time, he considered it essential for the expounders of religion to face those issues and refute the claims of the Mu^ctazilites and other philosophers with the help of logic and reason. He did not subscribe to the view that the Prophet of Islam made no mention of the issues raised by the rationalists of later times, either on account of his ignorance or because the Prophet did not consider it lawful to do so It was so simply owing to

the fact that these questions and the rationalistic modes of thought had not come into existence during the life time of the Prophet. Al-Ashari maintained that like the new problems of sacred and secular laws which were brought to the fore by exigencies of changing times, new questions in the realm of faith and metaphysics were also being raised. Therefore, like the jurisprudents who had grappled with the legal problems and solved them through analogical deduction and amplification of canon-laws, the doctors of religion and the scholastics were duty-bound to explain and elucidate the canons of faith in regard to these new questions. Al-Ashari wrote a treatise entitled *Istehsān-ul-Khaudh fil-kalām* to explain his view-point in this regard.

Thus, ignoring the approbation or opposition of the either sect, al-Ashʿari went ahead with the task of defending religion according to his own light. This undoubtedly required great courage and intelligence, and, as it were, al-Ashʿari proved himself equal to the task. With his lectures and writings he was able to stem the rising tide of the rationalism, *ʿitizāl* and philosophy, and save many souls from being swept away by the wave of scepticism. He inculcated faith and enthusiasm, zeal and self-confidence among the followers of orthodox school through his well-argued and forceful vindication of the faith. Al-Ashʿari's defence was, however, not the least apologetic. On the contrary, he was able to eradicate the inferiority complex that had unconsciously seized the followers of the orthodox creed, and was insidiously undermining their self-confidence. Al-Ashʿari soon turned the tables on the Muʿtazilites who, far from maintaining the force of their onslaught on the orthodox school, found it difficult to withstand the offensive of al-Ashʿari which was made with the full weight of an unshakable conviction. Abū Bakr ibn as-Sairfi says that the Muʿtazilites had caused a crisis for Islam but God brought forth Abul Hasan ʿAli al-Ashʿari to take up the cudgels against them. He was able to overcome them with his intelligence and dialectics. He, therefore, soon came to be regarded as one of the foremost expounders and renovators of the faith, while certain persons like Abū Bakr Ismaʿīli hold him as

second only to Ahmad ibn Hanbal for his endeavours to uphold and defend the true Faith[1]

Al-Ashʿari's Works :

Al-Ashʿari defended the orthodox school not merely with his sermons, debates and polemics, but also wrote valuable treatises to expose the weaknesses of heretical sects Al-Zahabi reports that the commentary on the Qur'ān written by al-Ashʿari ran into thirty volumes Al-Ashʿari is said to have written some 250 to 300 works; a large number of which traverses the main positions of the Muʿtazilites or other non-conformist sects and heretical creeds[2] One of the voluminous books written by al-Ashʿari is *Kitab-ul-Fusūl*, comprising twelve volumes, which confutes the doctrines of a number of sects including so-called rationalists, atheists and naturalists as well as other creeds like those of the Hindus, Jews, Christians and Magians[3] Ibn Khallikān has also mentioned some of his other works entitled *Kitab al-Lomʿa*, *Kitāb al-Mujaz*, *Idha'hul-Burhān*, *Al-Tabʿeen ʿAn Usūal id-Dīn*, and *Kitāb us-Sharah wat-Tafsīl* Besides these works on dialectics, al-Ashʿari wrote several books like *Kitāb ul-Qiyās*, *Kitāb ul-Ijtihād* and *Khabar-ul-Wāhid* on other religious sciences He wrote a tract to refute the doctrine of the negation of Traditions reported through more than one source, which was expounded by Ibn ur-Rāwandi In one of his books entitled *al-ʿAmad* al-Ashʿari has given a list of 68 books written by him till 320 A H i e four years before his death A number of these works run into ten or twelve volumes The books written by him during his last four years are also by no means inconsiderable His *Maqalāt-ul-Islamiyīn* shows that al-Ashʿari was not merely a dialectician but also a reliable chronicler of different faiths In this book he has recorded the doctrines of a number of sects with a sense of responsibility

1 *Tabʿeen*, p 53
2 *Ibid* p 136
3 *Ibid* p 128

behoving an eminent historian, for, his explanation of their dogmas agrees with the exposition of these faiths by their own followers.[1]

Profound Knowledge and Piety :

Al-Ashᶜari was not simply a prolific writer but one profound in knowledge also Like all other mentors of the old he was unrivalled in moral and spiritual excellence too. A jurist, Ahmad ibn ᶜAli, says that he had been with al-Ashᶜari for twenty years but he did not see anyone more reverent and godly, shy and modest in his worldly affairs but, at the same time, zestful where the performance of religious duties was concerned.[2] Abul Husain al-Harwi, a dialectician, relates that for years together al-Ashᶜari spent whole nights in vigils and performed morning prayers with the ablution taken at the nightfall.[3] The personal servant of al-Ashᶜari, Bindār ibn al-Husain, is on record that the only source of livelihood of al-Ashᶜari consisted of a fief with an income of seventeen *dirhams* per day, which he had inherited from his grandfather Bilāl ibn Abi Burdah ibn Abi Mūsā al-Ashᶜari.[4]

Al-Ashᶜari died in 324 A. H and was buried in Baghdad.[5] An announcement was made over his funeral that the "Defender of the Traditions" had passed away.

Abū Mansūr al-Maturīdi :

During the same period another theologian, Abū Mansūr al-Maturīdi (d. 332 A H) emerged in Samarkand to defend the

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1 Wensink in his book "Muslim Creed" (p 88) and Orelbner in his introduction to *Maqalāt ul-Islamiyīn*, have acknowledged this fact. (*Al-Ashᶜari*, p 64)

2 *Tabᶜeen*, p 141.

3 *Ibid*, p 141

4 *Ibid*, p 142 and Ibn Khallikān, Vol II, p 447

5 Ibn Khallikān, Vol II, p 447

faith against the attacks of the heretical sects[1] Owing to the continuous wrangling with the Muᶜtazilites, al-Ashᶜari had become a bit extremist in some of his views which were stretched further by his followers. Al-Maturīdī's thought is, however, marked by its moderation He rejected all such accretions to the Ashᶜarite thought which had become a part of it in due course of time, and which left many loopholes unfilled, many questions unanswered. Al-Maturīdī perfected the Ashᶜarite system and gave it an intellectually irreproachable form The differences between the Ashᶜarites and the Maturīdites were simply marginal and limited to 30 to 40 issues of comparatively lesser importance.[2]

Imām Abū Mansūr al-Maturīdī, belonging to the Hanafite school of jurisprudence. had a majority of his followers amongst the theologians and dialecticians of that school just as most of the Shafeᶜite dilecticians followed al-Ashᶜari Al-Maturīdī was also a man of letters who has left many valuable works refuting the doctrines of the Muᶜtazilites, Shiaᶜites and Qarmatians One of his books, *Tawilāt-i-Qur'ān* is an outstanding example of his keen intellect and mastery over rationalistic sciences of the day. However, since al-Ashᶜari had to confront the Muᶜtazilites in the centre of Islamic world, which also happened to be a seat of the Muᶜtazilite school, he came to exert a far greater influence over the intellectual circles Also, al-Ashᶜari was a great original mind who would always be remembered for laying the foundation of Islamic scholasticism

Later Ashᶜarites :

A number of reputed savants of profound knowledge and

1 This was the period when as a reaction to the Mūᶜtazilites attack on orthodox creed, several savants were giving attention to evolution of an Islamic scholasticism for the defence of Islam Tahāwi (d 331 A H) in Egypt and al-Maturidi (d 332 A H) in Samarkand took up the defence of religion but in due course of time both these schools of thought were absorbed in the Ashᶜarite school

2 Sheikh Muhammad ᶜAbdahū who has gone into the matter in greater detail says that the disputed issues were not more than thirty (*Ibn Taymiyah* by Mohammad Abū Zuhra p 184).

unequalled agility of mind were produced by the Ashᶜarite school. They contributed to the development of the school and exerted an immense influence on the minds of the intellectuals and the educated youth with the result that the orthodox school was enabled again to gain supremacy in the Islamic world. In the fourth century of the Muslim era were born such luminaries as Cadi Abū Bakr Baqillānī (d 403 A H.) and Abū Is'haq Isfraiʾni (d 418 A H) and after them came Abū Is'haq Shirāzi (d 476 A.H) and Imām ul-Harmayn Abul Maᶜāli ᶜAbd al-Malik al-Juwaim (d. 478 A H) in the fifth century who were held in high esteem owing to their profound knowledge. Abū Is'haq Shirāzi was the Rector of the Nizāmiah University at Baghdad. He was sent by Caliph Muqtadi-b'Illāh as his ambassadar to the Court of the Saljukid king Malik Shah He was held in such a high esteem by the populace that in whichever town he happened to pass during his journey from Baghdad to Nishapur, the entire population came out to greet him, people showered over him whatever valuables they could afford and took the dust underneath his feet out of reverence When Shirāzi arrived at Nishapur, the entire population came out of the city to greet him and Imām ul-Harmayn carried the saddle-cloth of Shirāzi on his shoulder as a porter's burden while escorting him Imām ul-Harmayn took a pride ever thereafter on the honour of being able to serve Shirāzi [1]

Imām ul-Harmayn was accorded the highest place of respect by Nizām ul-Mulk, the Prime Minister of the Saljuqid King Alap Arslan. He held the charge of Preacher of the principal mosque of Nishapur, Director of the Religious trusts and Rector of the Nizāmiyah University at Nishapur. Ibn Khallikān writes of him :

> "For thirty years he remained without a peer in the fields of learning and piety He was the chief mentor and preacher, exempler and a man of God "[2]

An annalist has related an incident which shows the respect accorded to Imām ul-Harmayn. Once Malik Shah, the Saljukid

1 *Tabqat al-Shafiᶜeih*, Vol III, pp. 91-92
2 Ibn Khallikān, Vol II, p 342

King announced the appearance of the new moon at the end of *Ramadhan* Imām ul-Harmayn, not satisfied with the evidence produced in this regard, got another announcement made which said.

> "Abul Maᶜālı (name of Imām ul-Harmayn) is satisfied that the month of *Ramadhan* will continue till tomorrow. All those who want to act on his decision should keep fast tomorrow also "

When the king questioned Imām ul-Harmayn about his announcement he said.

> "I am bound to obey the King in matters falling in the sphere of the State but in questions pertaining to religion, the king ought to have asked for my decision, since under the *Sharīᶜah*, a religious decree carries as much authority as the edict of the king. And the matters pertaining to fast and *ᶜId* are ecclesiastical issues with which the king has nothing to do."

The king had at last to get another declaration made saying that his earlier announcement was wrong and that the people should therefore follow the decision of Imām ul-Harmayn [1]

When Imām ul-Harmayn died in 478 A H, the markets of Nishapur were closed, the pulpit of the principal mosque was dismantled and four hundred of his disciples destroyed their pens and ink-pots as a mark of respect to him. The inhabitants of Nishapur received condolences and expressed their grief on the demise of Imām ul-Harmayn with one another for full one year [2]

Nizām ul-Mulk Tūsı, the Prime Minister of the then strongest Islamic kingdom of Saljukids was himself an Ashᶜarite He gave great impetus to the Ashᶜarite school by providing it with the official backing The two renowned educational institutions, the Nizāmiyah Universities of Nishapur and Baghdad proved to be a turning point in the Ashᶜarite bid for victory over other intellectual movements in the then Islamic world.

1 Akhlaq-i-Jalālı, pp 115-119

2 Ibn Khallikān, Vol II, p 243

CHAPTER VI

DECLINE OF DIALECTICS

Philosophic and Esoteric Schools :

Although the Ash'arites had gained ascendancy over other schools of thought by capturing the educational institutions, religious and intellectual circles, they began to lose their grip in due course of time. A man of al-Ash'ari's dominating stature, of original and agile mind had overcome the Mu'tazilite school and re-established the supremacy of the *Shari'ah* and the Traditions. His achievement can be attributed to his principles of scholasticism as much as to his own qualities of mind and heart, intelligence and learning. His school could continue to have its hold over the people by giving birth to similar illuminating personalities but unfortunately his followers, specially after the fifth century, developed a sense of complacency and were content simply with transmitting what they had learnt from their mentors They lost all originality which made them generally retrogressive. And those who were not content with treading the beaten path introduced philosophic concepts and terms into dialectics. They were enamoured by the philosophical method of reasoning although it neither provided any conclusive evidence to prove the issues they debated nor it employed an approach so natural and direct as the Qur'ān did. The method employed was, by its very nature, inconclusive and made their doctrines liable to be refuted.[1] Thus, the dialecticians who borrowed the philosophical terminology, concepts and approach did neither render any help to the orthodox school whom they claimed to represent, nor could they gain the respect of the rationalists and philosophers

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1 For a detailed discussion on the subject see Ibn Taymiyah's *Ar-Radd al-Mantaqiyīn*

Popularity of Philosophy :

Owing to the patronage and keen interest of Caliph Mamūn a large number of Syriac, Greek, Latin and Persian works on Hellenistic philosophy had been translated into Arabic. A large number of these were treatises pertaining to the Aristotelian school which were, on the whole, proving harmful to the intelligent yet imprudent youth These translations also comprised works on logic, physics, chemistry, mathematics, etc. which could have been studied with profit but more interest was shown in metaphysical writings which were nothing else than a collection of Greek mythology cleverly presented as an intricate yet well-argued philosophy It was a spell of words, ideas and thoughts based on certain assumptions and conjectures, non-existant and unverifiable; it had the genealogy of Heavens and Agent Intellect and horoscopes showing the movement of the assumed First cause, Logos and Nous For a people endowed with the revealed truth and the knowledge of the nature and attributes of the Supreme Being, the Alpha and Omega of the Universe, and of creation and purpose of human existence, it was hardly necessary to waste its time on a mythology passed on as philosophy. Nevertheless, the philosophers who were great admirers of Greek logic, physics and mathematics accepted its mythology couched in philosophical terms as if it were a revealed truth. It is rather amusing to see how these people venerating Greek sciences as the fountain-head of classical wisdom also accepted their metaphysical persuits so avidly. Perhaps they thought themselves to be standing in need of Greek metaphysics and philosophy just as they needed the Grecian empirical sciences.

Arab Philosophers :

The Grecian Philosophy was destined to get in the world of Islam such foremost exponents as Yaqūb al-Kindi (d. 258 A. H.), Abū Nasr al-Farābi[1] (d. 339 A H.) and Abū ʿAli ibn Sina[2]

1. Known as Alpharabius in the Latin West
2. Called Avicenna in Europe.

(d. 428 A. H.), as were not to be found amongst the Greeks themselves In piety and moral excellence, knowledge and wisdom they assigned such an infallible place to Aristotle which cannot perhaps be claimed even for the Primal Cause. It was really a misfortune of the Islamic world that the major portion of its Hellenistic inheritance comprised the works of Aristotle who, being a free thinker, differed from rather than agreed with the prophetic teachings. It was another misfortune that amongst the Arab philosophers, none was conversant with the languages in which these philosophical works were originally written. They had, therefore, to depend on the translations and commentaries which were either incorrect or presented in a different colour by their translators and interpreters Aristotle had thus come to wield such an influence over the Arab philosophers that they made his system the basis of their philosophical speculations without any evaluation or criticism of his thought.

Brethren of Purity :

By the end of the fourth century A. H , the speculations of Greek and Hellenistic philosophers had generally been adopted by the rationalist schools amongst the Muslims It became a craze for every educated youngman who wanted to pose as an intellectual and a progressive elite. *Ikhwān us-Safa* or Brethren of Purity, a kind of sectret fraternity like Freemasons, had come into existence in the second half of the fourth century with its seat in Basrā. It was an eclectic, philosophical-cum-scientific school of thought which strove to reconcile religious and ethical doctrines with the standpoint of Greek philosophy. The charter of their aims and objects ran thus :

> "The *Sharīʿah* of Islam has been polluted by ignorance and perversion of the truth, and it can now be purified only through philosophy, for, the latter comprises religious tenets and knowledge, wisdom and analogical methods of reasoning Now, only a synthesis of Greek philosophy and the *Sharīʿah* of the Prophet can achieve the desired objectives "[1]

1 Lutfi Jumʿah, p 253

The members of the Society had instructions not to waste their time and energy on aged persons for they had settled views, but to seek sympathisers amongst the youth who were prone to accept new ideas [1]

The *Ikhwān* summed up the philosophical and scientific learning of the time in an encyclopaedic collection of 52 Epistles[2], (*Rasail Ikhwān us-Safa*) dealing with every branch of science, such as physics mathematics, metaphysics, philosophy, etc. The Muʿtazilites and other rationalists who were sympathetic to the ideas formulated in these treatises gave widest circulation to these Epistles which found their way into the system of Hispano-Arabic philosophy too within a hundred years.[3]

The Mutʿazilites and Philosophers:

In their effort to rationalise the tenets of faith and to find out a confirmation of metaphysical doctrines such as the nature and attributes of God and the divine origin of the Qurʾān with the aid of human reason which was regarded by them as infallible, the Muʿtazilites had consciously or unconsciously done a great disservice to Islam. Nevertheless, they were religious persons who believed in revelation, were god-fearing, scrupulously followed the religious obligations, enjoined the lawful and prohibited the wrong.[4] This was so because they were serious about their religion and their rationalistic tendencies did not owe their origin to any external influence [5] In view of these features of *ʿitizāl*, it did not produce any movement inclined towards apostasy and atheism, denial of revelation and the Hereafter, or a tendency dangerously tinted with passivity and inertness, nor had the vigour and enthusiasm for faith amongst the Muslims been enfeebled by it.

1. Lutfi Jumʿah pp. 260-61.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 254
3. *Ibid.*, p 254
4. *Zuhr-al-Islam*, Vol III p 64.
5. They held that it was a duty of every Muslim to enjoin the lawful and prohibit the wrong. They also maintained that [illegible] were to [illegible] of grievous sin, he would be eternally damned

Philosophy was, however, quite different from *'ilm-al-kalām*...

Philosophy was, however, quite different from *ʿIʿtizāl*. In so far as philosophy claims to be an infallible source through which one can attain the knowledge of God in the fulness of His essence, it is a rival of revelation; it builds up a system of thought and approach which is opposed to the faith and tenets of a revealed religion. Obviously, therefore, as the philosophy caught the imagination of the people, the respect for religion and the prophets dwindled in their estimation. Not simply the faith in revelation but the ethical norms and injunctions laid down by it for the practical conduct of life began to be viewed from an entirely different angle. Philosophy gave birth to a section among the Muslims who were openly antagonistic to religion and took pride in rejecting the Islamic dogma. There were also philosophers who were not courageous enough to forsake Islam openly. They were content with paying a lip service to it but they had actually lost all faith in the religion.

Batinites:

Philosophy also gave birth to a new schism in Islam which was even more fatal to the spirit of religion and the teachings of the Prophet than the philosophy itself. These were Batinites or the adherents of a theological school of thought so named after *Bātin* (inner, esoteric), whose precursors and exponents were mostly drawn from the people who had lost their national kingdoms to the irresistible arms of Islam. They could not hope to regain their lost power and prestige in any open contest against the might of the Muslim people. There were also self-indulgent people or those desirous of commanding a position of power and influence but who found the injunctions laid down by Islam for the practical conduct of life as obstacles in their way. All these persons gathered under the banner of the Batinites for they knew that they could neither gain a victory over Islam in the battlefield nor invite Muslims to renounce their faith. They were aware that any attempt to follow either of these two courses would fire a frenzy of enthusiasm amongst the Muslims for the defence of Islam. They chose therefore an entirely new path to checkmate Islam

Esoteric and Exoteric interpretations of the Scripture :

The Scripture has clearly laid down the tenets of belief and code of conduct, if only because these are meant to be understood and acted upon by every human being :

> *And We never sent a messenger save with the language of his folk, that he might make (the message) clear for them.*
>
> (*Ibrāhīm* : 4)

The meaning of this verse is manifestly clear. The Prophet of Islam too had explained the import of Divine revelations and lived up to these precepts so that his followers might not remain in any doubt. The vocabulary of the Qur'ān and its meanings have thus been handed down, from the Prophet, without any break, and have ever afterwards been recognised and accepted by everyone as authentic and genuine, and to which no one raised any objection. The terms, prophethood (*nubuwwat*) and apostleship (*risālat*), angels (*malā'ika*), requital (*ma'ād*), Paradise (*Jannat*), Hell (*Dozakh*), the law (*sharī'ah*), obligatory (*farḍ*), necessary (*wājib*), lawful (*ḥalāl*), unlawful (*ḥarām*), poor-due (*zakāt*), prayer (*ṣalāt*), fast (*rozah*), pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) and similar other words convey a concise and definite purport of the doctrines, rites, ceremonies and teachings of Islam. In truth and reality, these teachings and articles of faith have been handed down without any divergence whatsoever and so has been the vocabulary and terminology evolved to signify the former. The two have become so interdependent that one cannot suffer any mutation without a variation in the other.

Whenever the words 'prophet', 'apostle', 'messenger', 'prayer', or 'poor-due' are used, these denote the same exposition as taught by the Prophet and understood by his companions and successors; all of whom acted upon these in a particular manner and transmitted the import of these words which have been handed down by one generation to another. The Bāṭinites knew that the interdependence of Qur'ānic vocabulary and its meanings form the key to the exposition of the doctrines of Muslim Faith; these constitute the moorings of intellectual and practical life of the Ummah, connecting the later generations with the fountainhead of

Divine guidance which lay in the past. If they could only drive a wedge between the past and the present, asunder the connecting link by rendering the import of Qur'ānic vocabulary ambiguous and oracular, undefined and obscure, then the *Ummah* could be made to give credence to any innovation or deviation, agnosticism or infidelity.

These elements, therefore, began a vigorous campaign to popularise a new type of Qur'ānic exegesis and the *Sunnah's* interpretation which invested the vocabulary used therein with a hidden or mystic sense apart from their open or manifest meanings. It was claimed that the allegoric or enigmatic sense, beyond the range of ordinary understanding and accessible only to the initiate, guided unto a purer knowledge than did the meanings of the Qur'ānic terms understood commonly by the scholars. The masses clinging to the literal sense could never attain the hidden but true content of the revelation. They maintained that the detailed ritual enjoined by the *Sharīʿah* was a cold formality meant for safeguarding the spiritual existence of the laity. In other words, the Qur'ānic terminology, like a veil, hid the deep and occult meaning,[1] but when an initiate attains the purer and sublimer knowledge he is set free from the legal obligations of the *Sharīʿah*.[2] They based their claim on this verse of the Qur'ān:

> ... *and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear*
>
> (*Al-Aʿrāf*: 157)

After accepting the doctrine of obvious and hidden meanings in principle, it presented no difficulty to explain away the meaning of the terms like 'prophet', 'revelation', 'angels', or

1 *Talbīs-e Iblīs*, p. 102

2 The Batinites also believed in the suspension of the obligations enjoined by the *Sharīʿah*. Sayyidna Idrīs, a Batinite exponent says: "Allah conferred prophethood on Ismaʿīl who abrogated the *Sharīʿah* of the Prophet Muhammad". Similar views held by Muiz ud-dīn-illah Fatimi, have also been reported.

'Hereafter' in whatever manner one desired. Here is an example of it:

"Prophet is a person illuminated by the Holy Spirit of the Divine Being. Gabriel is not an angel but an allegorical name for Divine grace...... Requital signifies coming back of a thing towards its origin. Pollution consists of giving out a secret; bathing, renewal of a pledge; fornication, transmission of the secret and occult knowledge to one not initiated; purity, disavowal of all tenets save the Batinite cult; ablution, acquirement of knowledge from an illuminated teacher; prayer, a call to obey the leader; poor-due, gradual initiation of the faithful to the hidden knowledge; fast, taking precaution to guard the secret; and *hajj*, seeking the knowledge of true wisdom which is an end unto itself. The knowledge of the occult is Heaven; literal sense, the Hell; and Kʿabah, the person of the apostle. ʿAli is the gate of Kʿabah while the Noah's flood described in the Qurʾān means a deluge of knowledge in which the unilluminated were drowned. The bonfire of Namrood alludes to his wrath and not fire; Abraham was asked not to offer his son for sacrifice but to obtain a pledge from him; the literalists are Gog and Magog; and the staff of Moses really means the argument and proof furnished by him."[1]

The Traitors of Islam:

The Batinite view in regard to the latent and deeper application of God's word or the Prophet's teachings and repudiation of the manifest sense has always been successfully adopted by the traitors and hypocrites. The so-called deeper sense, inter-woven with mystical and philosophical ideas borrowed from a variety of sources, can be made equally adaptable to the requirement of a learned elite as well as the uncritical mind in order to undermine

1. Abbreviated from Qawāʿid-o-ʿAqāʾid (written by Muhammad ibn Hasan ad-Dailmi Yamānī in 707 A. H.), pp 16-18.

the intellectual, moral, social and religious structure of the Muslim society. It can be employed to secure a split within the body-politic of Islam as, indeed, all the later rebels against the prophethood of Muhammad have taken advantage of this heretical view. All those impostors who have subsequently elevated themselves to the position of a fake prophethood, have first rendered ambiguous the terminology employed by the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* The two cases in point are Bahāism of Iran and Qadiānism[1] of India.

The so-called hidden or mystic interpretation of Qur'ānic vocabulary, an example of which has been given above, could have been hardly acceptable to a person not devoid of common-

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1. The Qadiānis too, like the Batinites, have denied the commonly understood meanings of such terms as the 'seal of prophethood,' 'Masīh and his second coming, 'miracles', Dajjāl, etc The Qur'ānic vocabulary has been retained but the import of these terms has been drastically changed as could be seen from the writings of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the commentary of the Qur'ān by Muhammad ʿAlī.

Bahāites on the other hand, have even produced a new *Sharīʿah* on the basis of their esoteric interpretation Their *Sharīʿah* enjoins fast for one month in a year, but the month is of only 19 days Instead of beginning the fast from early morning, they begin it from Sunrise. The faithful is required to follow the dictates of the *Sharīʿah* from the age of 11 to 42, and thereafter he is freed from its obligations Ablution is not obligatory but simply recommendatory *Pardah* is not necessary It is obligatory to visit the house in which Bāb, founder of the sect, was born. Congregational prayer is to be offered only for a funeral Nothing remains polluted after one accepts the faith of Bahāites and everything attains purity the moment a faithful touches it. Water is never polluted The law of inheritance differs from that of Islam (Shakib Arslan, Vol IV, p 355, reproduced from the French Encyclopædia of Islam).

M Huart has rightly written in his article on Bahāism in the Encyclopædia of Islam that in the garb of Islamic reformation, Bāb founded an entirely new religion whose fundamentals and beliefs are quite different from that of Islam and these have in fact been also presented as such in order to reconstruct a new social order. The same is the case with Qadianis Each has a prophet and a new religious order, like their predecessor, the Batinites

sense; but, the dialectical quibblings had already produced an atmosphere of intellectual anarchy in the world of Islam, wherein people unnecessarily longed for hairsplitting and philosophical sophistry. The Batinites were, therefore, successful in misleading those sections of the people who, under the influence of Greek philosophy and mythology, were freely applying the terminology like 'Nous' and 'Logos', 'Universal Spirit' and the 'First Cause' to Islamic doctrines, rites, etc. They also gathered round them some who were dissatisfied with the extremism of the orthodox school, while others, in the hope of helping the *Ahl-i-Bait* (the house of the Prophet) or opposing the ruling dynasty lent them a helping hand. With the help of an elaborate occult ritual for initiation of their adherents the Batinies had created a secret yet highly efficient instrument of power which was a cause of concern for the then powerful Islamic kingdoms. Some of the most reputed and ablest personages like Nizām ul-Mulk Tūsi and Fakhr ul-Mulk fell to the terrorism and murderous assaults of the Batinites.[1]

Destruction of the religious or political opponents of the Batinites by terrorism and murder had become such a common feature that nobody—not even the kings or highest officials—could be sure that he would remain alive till the next day. Ibn al-Jawzi reports that if anyone did not return to his house in Isfahan before the nightfall, it was presumed that he would have been killed by the Batinites. Apart from the lawlessness, the Batinites had also helped, as explained earlier, the growth of occult and heretical interpretation of the Qur'ānic text and perversion of the accepted tenets of the faith.

In an atmosphere surcharged with the anti-Islamic influences of Batinites and philosophical ideas borrowed from varied sources, a richly endowed thinker was required to save the situation. He had to be a man of outstanding knowledge and intellectual gifts, well-versed in philosophy as well as religious lore, and capable of

1 For a detailed list of personages killed at the hands of Batinites see *Nizām ul-Mulk Tūsi*, pp 560-563

drawing upon the findings of his predecessors with a greater clarity and perspicacity In order to bring about a synthesis between philosophical objectivity and the religious faith, he had also to be a man of unequalled piety and moral excellence endowed with an unflinching faith, and backed by a mystical illumination in regard to the Supreme Reality, one who possessed a burning zeal for renovation of the faith and who could give a call to uphold the tenets of the *Shari'ah* and the *Sunnah* Such a man appeared on the scene in the middle of the fifth century A H., and he was Abū Hamid al-Ghazali.

This was the most coveted academic position of the time although al-Gazali was then not more than 34 years of age. His renown as a savant, teacher and an eloquent speaker spread so rapidly that his lectures began to be over-crowded by an ever larger number of students and scholars. Sometimes in addition to as many as 300 students, hundreds of nobles and chiefs attended his lectures. Al-Ghazali soon came to occupy, on account of his scholarship, intelligence and forceful personality, such a position of eminence in Baghdad that he was regarded a compeer of the grandees and chiefs of the State. In prestige and solemnity, according to a chronicler of his time, al-Ghazali surpassed the nobility of Baghdad including even the Caliphate.[1] In 485 A.H. the ᶜAbbāsid Caliph Mūqtadi b'Illāh, appointed him as his ambassador in the court of Turkhān Khatoon, who then headed the Saljukid empire. Another ᶜAbbāsid Caliph, Mustazhir b'Illāh, held al-Ghazali in high esteem and it was on his behest that he wrote a treatise to refute the cult of Batinites. He named the Book *al-Mustazhri* after the Caliph's name.

Al-Ghazali's Intellectual Crisis :

During this period of prosperity, worldly fame and brilliant achievement for which a scholar can aspire, it was only natural that al-Ghazali should have led a life of contentment, as most of the scholars usually do. But for a man of lofty ideals, creative genius and intellectual grit, as al-Ghazali was, it was unthinkable that he should rest satisfied merely with position and prestige. There can be no denying the fact that this very internal conflict and disquietude, the Promethean quest, made him a renovator of the faith. However, history can offer but a few such striking example where one had abandoned a brilliant career, fame and position for the satisfaction of his soul. Al-Ghazali has himself described the deep inner struggle which forced him to give up all the worldly possessions including his teaching vocation, and to

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafeᶜīyah*, Vol. IV, p 107.

search after Truth. These were Dialecticians, who claimed to possess insight and wisdom, Batinites, who insisted on a hidden, true and deeper knowledge vouchsafed to them through impeccable *Imāms*; Philosophers, who arrogated themselves as masters of logic and reason; and, Mystics, who laid a claim to be illuminated and favoured with beatific vision I proceeded to explore the ideas, thoughts and writings of each of these groups but was not satisfied with anyone of them I studied the writings of the reputed dialecticians and authorities on this science, and myself penned a few treatises I reached the conclusion that although this branch of learning fulfilled its object, it was not sufficient for my purpose as it argued on the premises put forth by its opponents. The dialecticians have to rely upon a number of premises and propositions, which they accept in common with the philosophers, or, they are obliged to accept the authority of the Qur'ān or the *Sunnah*, or the consensus But these could not be of much avail to one who has no faith in anything except in the necessary principles of reason, as was the case with me.

"In regard to philosophy, I thought it necessary to make a detailed and critical study of the science before forming my own opinion of it. I had little time to spare from my pre-occupations of teaching and writing since, I had as many as 300 students who attended my lectures. However, I somehow managed to find time for it and after having finished the entire literature on the subject within two years, I devoted one year to reflection on the premises of philosophy. I reached the conclusion that the secular sciences can be divided into six branches. Mathematics, Logic, Physics, Politics, Ethics and Metaphysics. Of these, the first five do not either deny or affirm religion, nor, is it necessary to reject them for the affirmation of religion. The precepts of Physics sometimes do come into conflict with the religious doctrines but these are only few. In this regard one ought to believe that the natural

phenomenon is not self-propelled but dependent on God Almighty. It is true that all those who come across the agility and incisiveness of the intellect of philosophers in these sciences, are generally overawed by them and are led to the conclusion that this would be true of them in every branch of learning. It is, however, not necessary that anyone skilled in one branch should be an adept in another science as well Anyway, when people see the philosophers denying faith and conviction, they too walk into their shoes On the other hand, some brainless exponents of Islam consider it their bounden duty to refute whatever the philosophers say and sometimes even go to the extent of denying their researches in the field of Physics as well A harmful effect of it is that all those who accept the veracity of intellect's search of truth and uphold the necessary principles of reason, begin to have doubts in Islam itself and become sceptics. The only branch of knowledge which comes into conflict with religion is Metaphysics, and it is in this science that the philosophers have generally been misled. As a matter of fact, the philosophers have themselves not been able to follow satisfactorily, in this branch of science, the laws of rigorous argumentation they had evolved for logical reasoning, and that is why there are wide differences amongst them in regard to it I have, therefore, arrived at the conclusion that philosophy would not be able to satisfy me, for, the intellect cannot by itself cover the entire field of objects and events nor unravel all the mystries.

"As for the Batinites, I have had an opportunity to make a detailed study of their cult for writing *al-Mustazhiri* I had found that the veracity of their tenets and doctrines ultimately depends on the teachings of an impeccable and illuminated teacher, the *Imām*; but the existence of such a teacher stands to be verified, and, in truth and reality, both, are, extremely dubious. Now, only Mysticism

remained to be examined and, therefore, I turned my attention to it. Mysticism, too, is of two kinds, intellectual and intuitional. It was easy for me to look into the first and I went through *Qoot ul-Qulūb* of Abū Talib Makki and the tracts of Harith al-Muhāsibi, Junaid, Shibli, Bā Yazīd al-Bustāmi and other mystics I gathered whatever knowledge of mysticism could be had from the books but, I found that the knowledge of the essence of reality could be obtained not through study of mysticism but through intuition, transport and ecstasy brought about by purification of the heart. I had already attained an unflinching faith, through the speculative branches of knowledge and religious and secular sciences I had mastered, on the existence of Supreme Reality, Prophethood and Resurrection. This conviction was, however, not attained through an experience or argument which could be analysed. It had been firmly implanted in my heart that the eternal bliss could be had only through inculcating the awe of God, renunciation of the material world, whole-hearted attention to the eternal life in the Hereafter and an earnest devotion to God All this was, however, not possible so long as one did not sever the attachments of position and riches, fame and worldly life

"I pondered over my own condition. I realised that I was wholly immersed in worldly temptations, its ties and attachments. The vocation of teaching appeared to be a noble pursuit but, as further reflection revealed, I was paying my entire attention to those sciences which were neither important nor beneficial for the Hereafter. I probed into the motives of my work as a teacher, and found that, instead of any sincere desire to propitiate God, I was after honour and fame. I was convinced that I was on the edge of an abyss, and if I did not take immediate steps to retrieve the situation, I should be doomed to eternal fire. Still undecided, one day, I resolved to abandon everything and leave Baghdad; the next day I

gave up my resolution Six months passed away in this state of uncertainty On the one hand the pull of temptations asked me to remain where I was, on the other, the Faith gave a call to get up It cried to me, 'Up! up! Thy life is short and thou hast a long journey to make All thy pretended knowledge is nought but falsehood and fantasy' Often my carnal thoughts whispered to me, 'This is a temporary yearning God has favoured thee with respect and honour If thou giveth it up and then tries to retrace thy steps and come back, thou wilt not be able to get it back again' Thus, I remained, torn asunder by earthly passions and religious aspirations, for about six months, until it became impossible to postpone my decision any longer. Then, God Himself caused an impediment He chained my tongue and prevented me from lecturing Vainly I desired to teach my pupils who came to me, but my mouth became dumb The silence to which I was condemned cast me into a violent despair. I lost all appetite, I could neither swallow a morsel of bread, nor drink a drop of water Gradually I became too weak and at last the physicians under whose treatment I was, gave up all hope of my recovery They said that my heart was so severely afflicted that no treatment would be of any avail till this affliction was removed Finally, conscious of my weakness and of the prostration of my soul, I took refuge in God like a man who has exhausted himself and is denied all means I prayed to Him *Who answereth the wronged one when he crieth unto Him*,[1] and He made easy for me to sacrifice honour, wealth and family

"I intended to go to Syria but told the people that I would go to Mecca When the people around me came to know of my decision, they deprecated it deeply for they could not even think of any laudable reason behind my resolve In their opinion, I enjoyed a coveted place which

1 *An-Namal*, 62

enabled me to preach and disseminate knowledge. The people also began to spread numerous rumours about me. Those who were far away thought that I was giving up my profession at the instance of the administration. On the other hand, those who knew how much government was keen on retaining my services considered it a misfortune that I was leaving the premier academy of Islamic learning. Finally, I left Baghdad, having given away all my fortune and preserving only as much as was necessary for my support and that of my children. I went to Syria from Baghdad and remained there for two years. During this period, I engaged myself in meditation and penance. I practised whatever I had learnt of the ways of mystics and endeavoured to purify my soul, rectify my morals and occupied myself with the recollection of God. For a time I retired to the principal mosque of Damascus Often, I went into one of the minarets of the mosque and remained there in seclusion for days together. From Damascus, I went to Jerusalem. There too I used to retire into the *Sakharah* After having visited the tomb of Abraham, I felt a desire to go for the *Hajj* and visit the Mosque of the Prophet I, therefore, embarked upon my journey to Hejaz After the *Hajj* was over, I went to my home town although I had earlier no longing to visit my family I took care to spend my time in secluded meditation, purification of the heart and recollection of God at my house but the events and happenings, care of dependants and their needs constantly intervened in securing a perfect state of peace and bliss I was, however, not denied of it entirely and, from time to time, was favoured with the illumination and ecstatic transports. I spent ten years in this manner. What revelations were made to me during this period of meditation could not be described but, I must say for the benefit of my readers that I came to know that the mystics were most truly godly, their life most beautiful, their rules of conduct most perfect, and their morality

sake of undergoing a physical exercise; some to emulate others, and there were others who considered religious practices necessary for gaining certain material benefits. These persons saw no harm in giving up these practices if they could find a way to save themselves from the harm which non-performance of religious observances would have entailed I realised that I could easily remove their doubts As a matter of fact, I found myself fully capable of exposing the hollowness and implausibility of their philosophic convictions because of the deep knowledge of speculative sciences. I, therefore, felt an ardent desire to take up this work since it appeared to be the crying need of the time I said to myself: 'How far dost it befit thee to sit in seclusion? It is an epidemic that is spreading like wild fire and the learned have themselves fell a victim to the same disease The bondsmen of God have reached the brink of destruction'. But, then, I also thought whether it would be possible for me to accomplish such a huge task. I said to myself. 'The guidance of the Prophet was available in the days of yore, but now if thou invitest men to Truth and the way of God, the world wilt turn thy enemy. How wilt thou, single-handed, struggle against them all, and endure the hardships? This could have been possible under the reign of a pious king determined to assist and promote religion'. Thus I expressed my helplessness before God and decided to spend the rest of my life in seclusion. But, it seems, God had willed otherwise. The king implored me to proceed to Nishapur and fight the growing heretical tendencies The king had appealed to me so earnestly that my rejection of his order would have certainly made him angry Then I said to myself: 'One of the reasons for thy resolve having fallen apart, it cannot be right now to remain in seclusion for this would simply mean avoiding discomforts and hardships'. Has not God said:

Do men imagine that they will be left (at ease) because they

say, We believe, and will not be tested with affliction? Lo! We tested those who were before you. Thus Allah knoweth those who are sincere, and knoweth those who feign.[1]

And God has addressed his Prophet thus although he was the most exalted amongst His bondsmen

Messengers indeed have been denied before thee and they were patient under the denial and the persecution till Our succour reached them. There is none to alter the decisions of Allah. Already there hath reached thee (somewhat) of the tidings of the messengers (We sent before).[2]

"I also sought the advice of a few friends who were illuminated and have had beatific visions. They advised me to give up seclusion. Few of them related the dreams some pious persons had seen which indicated that the step I proposed to take would have far-reaching effects for the revival of Faith. They hinted that in the fifth century which was to begin after a month something remarkable was to happen which would renovate the Faith. It has been foretold in the Traditions that in the beginning of every century God brings forth a man who restores and reanimates the faith of the people. All these tidings gave hope to me. God made it easy for me to set off for Nishapur and I finally made up my mind to renounce the seclusion in 499 A.H. I had left Baghdad in 488 A.H. and thus I remained in seclusion for eleven years. God had ordained it to happen thus, however. I could not have dreamt of giving up honour and fame before I left Baghdad but God had made that easy for me. Similarly, I could never have thought of renouncing my retirement and going back to teach again, but it too was made easy by God."[3]

Al-Ghazali set off for Nishapur in 499 to resume his teaching vocation in the Nizamiyah University. There was, however, a

1 *Al-ʿAnkabūt*, 2-3

2 *Al-Anʿām*, 34

3 Abbreviated from *al-Munqidh*, pp. 114-116

world of difference between his taking up the teaching profession earlier and for the second time. Earlier he taught to secure honour, wealth and position, but now he considered himself commissioned to exhort people to purify their morals and soul. He explains the difference thus:

> "I know that I have come back to my vocation of teaching but it would not be correct to call it a resumption of my earlier occupation. There is a world of difference between the two Earlier, I used to teach the sciences which were calculated to bring honour, wealth and position, and by my words and actions, I led my students to that direction, but now, I want to teach them the knowledge that helps to renounce wealth and position. God is fully aware that this is my intention, and my only desire is that my present efforts should lead to the purification of my soul and the souls of other people I do not know whether I would reach my destination or would pass away before the completion of my task. However, I believe, and have an unflinching conviction, on account of the knowledge of certitude which has been revealed unto me, that the real power rests in God alone. It is only He who can save one from evil and profanity and lead unto the path of sanctity and grace I did not come here of my own accord, it was God who moved me on to this place, I did not begin my work, but God made me to begin it I beseech God that he may first cleanse and elevate my soul before he causes me to reform and purify the souls of others May He reveal unto me righteousness which I may follow; and disclose the evil which I may forsake."[1]

Achievements of al-Ghazali:

Endeavours of al-Ghazali for the revivification of Islam were two-fold, as follows.

(1) He stemmed the tide of philosophy and of the Batanite

1. Abbreviated from *al-Munqidh*, p. 116

evil and began a counter-attack on these movements on behalf of Islam.

(2) He made a critical evaluation of the religious and moral state of the then Islamic society and proposed measures to reform it.

Encounter with Philosophy:

The efforts made till the time of al-Ghazali to counteract the atheistic influence of Greek philosophy consisted merely of an apologetic vindication of Islamic tenets. Philosophers were then taking the offensive and the scholastics of Islam, the dialecticians, were content with parrying the attack. Philosophy was undermining the very foundations of Islam while Dialectics tried to shield it but none amongst the dialecticians and doctors of religion had the courage to strike at the roots of philosophy. In fact no savant of Islam had tried to make any critical evaluation of the philosophic premises and to beleaguer the aggressor in its own citadel. The tone of the dialecticians, save only that of Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari who did not have, however, to face the philosophers, was apologetic, or, at best, defensive. Al-Ghazali was the first man, who, along with a profound knowledge of religious sciences, made a detailed and deep study of philosophy as well He then wrote *Maqāsid al-Falāsifah* (The aim of the Philosophers) in which he summed up the salient issues of Logic, Metaphysics and Physics In this book he condensed the philosophical premises dispassionately in an explicit manner. He made it clear in the introduction to this book that Mathematics is a science which does not admit of any difference of opinion but it has nothing to do with the religion; either in the affirmation or negation of the latter. Religion, however, comes into conflict with Metaphysics. The logical syllogisms are sometimes wrong while there may also be differences of opinion in regard to the terminology employed in this branch of knowledge. Physics is sometimes mixed up with facts, uncertain or dubious, for Metaphysics is also included in its scope. Logic merely subserves these sciences by lending its terminology to them.

Al-Ghazali then wrote another book entitled *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah* (Incoherence of the Philosophers) In this book he criticises, from an Islamic point of view, Physics and Metaphysics of the philosophical school and brings out their weaknesses and contradictions in a lucid and forceful language. We find al-Ghazali expressing himself self-confidently, in an elegant and incisive style. At places he employs a satirical diction which was not only effective but perhaps necessary to bring back the self-confidence of those who had been overawed by Philosophy. We find the author self-reliant and indomitable, attempting to demolish the reputation of the teachers of philosophy, he speaks of the Greek philosophers and guides as his equals and points out their mistakes in a manner none had dared before him In order to save the situation for Islam it was imperative that someone should be able to strike at the foundations of philosophy instead of merely defending the faith. Al-Ghazali rose to the occasion and this book bespeaks of his endeavour from cover to cover In the introduction to *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah* he writes

> "Now-a-days we see people who appear to arrogate themselves as intellectually superior to the populace. These people look disdainfully on religious practices for they have learned the awe-inspiring names of some of the Greek Philosophers like Aristotle, Socrates and Plato. They have learnt from the eulogistic writings of their admirers that the Greek doctors of the old had made far-reaching discoveries in the fields of Mathematics, Logic, Physics and Metaphysics, and that these teachers were peerless in qualities of heart and heart, but that they had rejected the faith and its doctrines. The Greek masters regarded religion as a man-made dogma without any content of truth. Now, following in the footsteps of their mentors these elements have too rejected religion so that they may be taken as an intelligent, liberal and smart set of fellows. Simply to feign themselves as elite and intellectuals, these persons denigrate religion, and it is why I thought of bringing to light the mistakes committed by the Greek philosophers in

their writings on Metaphysics I also intend to demonstrate how the premises and principles, notion and observations of these philosophers are not a whit more than child's play or, indeed, a laughing-stock"[1]

After giving a detailed description of the genealogy and horoscope of the Greek philosophic-cum-metaphysical concepts like Logos, Nous, the First Cause or the intermediate agents between the Primal Cause and His creation, al-Ghazali becomes more trenchant and lively in his criticism of the philosophers He writes.

"Your doctrines and details thereof are simply assumptions and conjectures, or, to be truthful, obscure reflections overcast with darkness. Nobody would doubt the insanity of a man who even dreams of such nonsensical things"[2]

Again, he says:

"I really wonder how even a brainless fellow can swallow such inconsistencies, much less those philosophers who are ever inclined to hairsplitting in logical disputations."[3]

He expands this idea at another place where he writes

"In venerating the Agent Intellect, these persons have completely overlooked to accord the reverence and awe due to God Almighty. They have made Him an ineffective diety, a simple essence, dealing with the universals and having no knowledge of the particulars He bears a distinction from a lifeless entity only in so far as He possesses His own consciousness (and who knows that the lifeless objects are devoid of all consciousness). Verily, God misguides those who forsake the path of Divine guidance and deny His revelation.

I made them not to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor their own creation . . . .[4]

1. *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah*, pp. 2-3
2. *Ibid*, pp 29-30
3. *Ibid*, p 33
4. *Al-Kahf*, p 51

"Those who have misgivings about the omnipotence of God Almighty think that divine things can be subjected to their thought and imagination Being presumptuous of their intellect they hold that it is not necessary to follow the prophets of God. That these persons should propagate, under the cover of philosophy, such ludicrous presumptions which others would be ashamed to dream of, is indeed natural and reasonable"[1]

Effect of the Incoherence of Philosophers :

The courageous criticism and, to an extent, the denigration of Philosophy by al-Ghazali began a new chapter in the history of Islamic scholasticism which was later brought to a successful completion by Ibn Taymiyah

Tahāfut al-Falāsafah caused an stir in the ranks of philosophers who had to suffer an irreparable loss on account of it. However, after al-Ghazali there arose no philosopher worthy of note for one hundred years. At last, Ibn Rushd,[2] a great admirer of Aristotle and a spirited defender of philosophy wrote *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (Incoherence of Incoherence) by way of rejoinder to *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah* by the close of the sixth century. Many scholars are of the view that if Ibn Rushd had not put up the defence on behalf of philosophy, it would have been crippled by the hostile criticism of al-Ghazali. Philosophy was granted a fresh lease of life through the efforts of Ibn Rushd for another one hundred years[3]

Attack on Batinites :

Besides philosophy, the crisis caused by the Batinites movement had received attention of al-Ghazali during his first stay in Baghdad when he wrote *al-Mustaz'hiri* at the instance of the then Caliph Al-Ghazali has made a mention of this book in his

1 *Tahāfut al-Falāsafah*, p 31
2 Known as Averroes in the West
3 Lutfi Jum'ah, p 72

autobiographical account of the search for truth entitled *al-Munqidh min ad-Dhalāl*. Al-Ghazali perhaps wrote three other treatises entitled *Hujjat ul-Haq*, *Mufsalul-Khilāf* and *Qāsim ul-Bātiniyah*[1] Two more books on the subject *Fadhayah al-Ibāhiyah* and *Mawahim ul-Bātiniyah* have been mentioned in the list of al-Ghazali's writings No one else could have encountered Batinites so successfully as al-Ghazali did, for, he was fully aware of the ways of mystics besides being a savant of both the secular and religious sciences. Taking shelter behind the terminology drawn from philosophy, their cult of "esoteric meanings" was a combination of sophism and conspiracy For a man like al-Ghazali it was comparatively easy to smash this snare of Batinites His effective answer to the challenge of Batinites made it a discredited sect ever after him

Al-Ghazali's evaluation of Social Conditions :

The second remarkable achievement of al-Ghazali was his evaluation of the religious and moral state of the society from an Islamic viewpoint which awakened the spirit for re-Islamisation in the community *Ihyā' ʿUlūm id-Dīn* (The Revival of Religous Sciences) was the result of his endeavours in this regard

Ihyā' ʿUlūm id-Dīn :

Ihyā' ʿUlūm id-Dīn occupies a distinguished place among the few literary works which have had a lasting effect in moulding the moral and spiritual life of the Islamic world Hafiz Zain ud-dīn al-Iraqi (author of *Alfiyah*), who brought out a collection of the Traditions quoted in the *Iyhā'*, is of opinion that it is the foremost literary composition of Islamic peoples[2] ʿAbdul Ghāfir Farsi, a contemporary of Al-Ghazali and a disciple of Imām ul-Harmayn, says that no book like it had been written before.[3]

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1 Al-Ghazali has mentioned the names of these books in his another book *Jawāhir ul-Qur'ān*, p 26

2 *Taʿrīf al-Ihyā'*. Vol I, p 14.

3 *Ibid*, p 15

Another reputed scholar, Sheikh Muhammad Gāzrūni, remarked that if all the sciences were effaced completely, he could revive them with the help of the *Ihyā'*.[1] Hafiz Ibn al-Jawzi differed from al-Ghazali on many issues, but he has acknowledged the popularity and matchless sincerety of the *Ihyā'* and has written a summary of it under the caption *Minhāj ul-Qāsidīn* The *Ihyā'* was written at a time when al-Ghazali had returned home after more than ten years of seclusion and meditation in search of the truth. He now wanted to disseminate his message of reform and rectitude. In reflecting the tremendous sincerity and heroic sacrifice, heart-felt certitude and ardent zeal of the author to revivify the true faith the *Ihyā'* presents an striking example. Shibli Na'umani writes in *Al-Ghazali*.

> "In Baghdad he felt an irresistible urge to embark upon the quest for truth. He proceeded to study each religion but still remained dissatisfied. At last he turned to mysticism but it was something to be experienced in the recesses of one's heart rather than to be studied, and the first step towards it was purification of the heart and transformation of the self. The pre-occupations of al-Ghazali, however, left no room for it. What honour and fame, sermons and debates, had to do with the purification of heart and soul? Obviously, it was a path that lead to wilderness.
>
> "At last, donning a mendicant's habit he left Baghdad and took to wandering. After a long period spent alternately in complete seclusion and meditation, he had an access to divine manifestation. He would have spent the rest of his life lost in beatific visions, but witnessing the contamination of religion and morals all around him—a malady from which the laity and the elite, the savant and the illiterate were suffering alike—he began to give expression to his experiences and convictions. He could not bear with equanimity the degeneration of the mentors

1. *Ta'rif ul-Ihyā'*, Vol I, p 15.

of faith into a cess-pool of crass materialism. He wrote the book in these circumstances. As he himself writes in its preface:

"I found every one hankering after the material gains. People had become forgetful of the eternal salvation, while the doctors of religion, who were guides to the right path, were not to be found any longer. There remained only those who had lost their soul to worldly temptations. These people had led every one to suppose that knowledge consists simply in the debates and arguments by which they spread their fame, or else ornate sermons, by which they held the people spell-bound, or else legal opinion, by which they sat in judgement to settle the disputes of others. The knowledge that was required to illuminate the path leading to the world-to-come had thus completely disappeared. I could not endure this state of affairs and had ultimately to sound the alarm."[1]

Al-Ghazali's critique of the Society:

Al-Ghazali's object was to bring about a moral and spiritual transformation of the people of his time, he wanted to create for the purpose an awareness of the ills and weaknesses the Muslims as well as their religious and intellectual leaders were suffering from; to tell them how the devil of earthly passions had taken hold of the different sections of society, and, to let them realise what factors were responsible for diverting their attention from the true content of faith to its outer forms, rituals and customs, thus making them oblivious of the eternal life and the will and pleasure of God. In order, therefore, to achieve the end he had in view, al-Ghazali undertook a detailed analysis of the intellectual and moral approach of the then society towards life and the world; highlighted the vices of different sections; defined the aims and the methods necessary to achieve those objectives; delineated the individual and communal obligations of the people;

1 *Al-Ghazali*, pp. 48-49.

brought out the distinguishing features and differences between secular and religious sciences; invited the attention of the affluent and ruling classes towards their shortcomings; criticised the unjust laws and rules promulgated by the state; and exhorted them to give up their un-Islamic ways, customs and usages. It was thus the first detailed sociological study in Islam which brought out courageously and poignantly the social and moral ills of the society and suggested measures for its reform and transformation into a healthy community.

The Religious Preceptors:

Al-Ghazali held the religious doctors, the *ᶜUlema*, responsible for the all round religious and moral degeneration of the Muslim peoples To him, religious doctors were the salt of the earth; if they went astray, nothing could keep the people on the right path. An Arab poet has expressed the same idea in these words.

> "O! teachers of Faith, you are the salt of the earth.
> If the salt gets contaminated, what is there to purify it again."[1]

Complaining that the prevailing widespread vices were accountable to the negligence of religious teachers, al-Ghazali writes:

> "The third reason, which really constitutes an incurable disease, is that the patients there are but no physicians are available for their treatment. *ᶜUlema* are the physicians but these days they are themselves confined to the sick-bed and unable to cure others"[2]

The same reason has been attributed by al-Ghazali for the waywardness of the rulers and kings.

He writes:

> "In short, the debasement of the people proceeds from the corruption of their rulers, who get perverted on account of the demoralization of the doctors of religion. Had

1 *Ihyā'*, Vol I, p 54
2 *Ibid*, Vol I, p 54

there been no self-seeking Qadis and religious scholars, the rulers would not have become so depraved, for, in that case, they would have had to be mindful of the warnings of the *ᶜUlema*."[1]

The neglect of the then *ᶜUlema* to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, as the savants of the old used to do, was severely criticised by al-Ghazali. He deplored the timidness of the religious teachers of his time who were not courageous enough to uphold what was right in the face of kings because they had been infected by the love of wealth, power and honour. After citing numerous instances where the *ᶜUlema* had fearlessly stood against the injustice of powerful despots and tyrannical rulers, he says in the *Ihyā*ʾ:

"This is how the learned enjoined the right and forbade the wrong. They did not care at all for the pomp and glory of the kings for they used to put their trust in God alone and were confident that He would protect them They were ever willing to lay down their lives for the sake of a righteous cause, if God so desired. Whatever they said was taken to heart, for, their intentions were pure, their immaculate sincerity moulded even the hard-hearted brutes; but, now, the earthly temptations have made them dumb, and even if they speak out it has no effect because they lack sincerity. They can be effective even now if they cultivate selflessness, detachment and earnestness People have become depraved because of their rulers; and, the rulers, because of the *ᶜUlema*, who have been demoralised on account of their love for wealth, power and honour One who has been infected by worldly temptations cannot admonish even the lowly and the poor much less the elites and kings"[2]

Most of the religious scholars of his day, as Ghazali pointed out, had given themselves up to the hair-splitting of juristic issues

1 *Ihyā*ʾ, Vol II, p 132
2 *Ibid.*, Vol II, p 312.

and cavilling of real or imaginary problems In social gatherings and religious meetings, royal courts and scholarly seminars specious contentions of a juristic nature had come to be regarded as an inevitable intellectual diversion. It had become such a rage in those times that in their craze to arm themselves for a knock-out victory in the debates and disputations, the scholars were neglecting all other branches of learning including even the religious sciences—the knowledge necessary for spiritual and moral rectitude or for the preparation of the life in the Hereafter. Al-Ghazali protests against this state of affairs in the *Ihyā'* in these words ·

> "If any scholar-jurist is asked about the virtues and vices like patience and thankfulness, fear and awe, envy and malice, hypocrisy and deception, contentment and earnestness or how to avoid hankering after the praise and respect by others, he would not be able to give any answer although he ought to know these as the preparation for life in the world-to-come depends on them On the other hand, if you ask him about *lā'n*, *zihār*, *sabaq* or *ram*, he will give out a detailed description of each although one seldom comes across these issues, and, if anybody does need a juristic opinion on these matters, he can easily obtain it in every town. These scholars thus devote their entire time and energy in learning and teaching the details of similar insignificant issues but remain oblivious of the knowledge essential for a religious teacher. If these scholars are ever asked about it, their reply is that they are engaged in acquiring a religious knowledge which constitutes a communal obligation (*Fardh-i-Kafāyah*) enjoined by the *Sharī'ah* They are really keeping their own-selves in dark and deceiving others, for, as everybody knows, he who wants to acquit himself of a communal obligation should first discharge the obligations enjoined on him personally. Also, there are many other communal obligations which claim a preference, as, for example, we have many non-Muslim physicians in the city whose evidence is not

acceptable under the *Sharīʿah* in religious matters requiring medical opinion. But we do not find any scholar turning to the study of medicine. Students overcrowd the classrooms of the sciences pertaining to jurisprudence, logic and dialectics although there are hundreds of jurisconsults who are ever willing to let one have their legal opinions I fail to understand how these scholars can defend their engagement in a communal obligation which is being already performed by numerous *ʿUlema*, while disregarding another obligation which is not being attended by anyone. Is there any reason for it except that the study of medicine cannot help them to secure trusteeship of the charitable trusts, enforcement of the wills, guardianship of the orphans and management of their property, appointment to the posts of judges and official jurists, respect and honour in governmental circles or a precedence over their compatriots, friends and foes ?"[1]

At another place in the *Ihyā'* he writes ·

"There is not a town in which several matters do not assume the position of joint or communal obligations, but there is none to look after these nor any scholar pays any heed to them. Take, for instance, the study of medicine There are a number of towns in which there is no practising physician whose evidence is admissible in law, but the scholars lack all interest in this profession. Similar is the case with the obligation incumbent on all Muslims to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong (but it is being overlooked by everybody) "[2]

Al-Ghazali laments over the general lack of interest in and apathy of the people towards the tenets of faith and calls attention towards the need of spreading literacy and disseminating the knowledge of religion After emphasising the paramount need for spreading religious knowledge he continues ·

"For anyone who is solicitous of his religion, the

1. *Ihyā'*, Vol I, p 19
2 *Ibid.*, Vol I, p 38.

teaching and spreading the knowledge of the faith, which is also a joint obligation, is such a serious occupation that it would not permit him to go into unnecessary juristic details and waste his time in any scholastic hair-splitting or similar other trivialities "[1]

Al-Ghazali explained why the wrangling over disputed issues had come to assume such an importance among the pedagogues of his time who, in due course, had began to devote their time and energy to those fruitless quibbhngs. Tracing the history of these vain disputations he writes :

"The Caliphs succeeding the Prophet of Islam, were scholars and jurists, competent to give juristic opinions in all matters and they seldom required the help of other companions of the Prophet in this task. The learned among the companions, therefore, occupied themselves with the studies and orisons leading to salvation in the world-to-come If they were ever asked for any legal opinion, they would refer the question to another jurist and remain absorbed in the recollection of God. Numerous instances of this kind have been preserved by the annalists. Thereafter, undeserving and incompetent persons came to preside over the Islamic commonwealth. They were also incompetent to give legal opinions or settle the disputes of the people and, therefore, they had of necessity to depend upon the jurisconsults in the administration of justice. The scholars among the descendants of the companions of the Holy Prophet generally followed in the footsteps of the scholars of the old ; they were aware of the true content of the faith, were selfless and detached, and hence they avoided the company of the rulers and kings. The Ummayyad and the ʿAbbāsid Caliphs had to look round for them and implore them to accept the offices of jurists and judges. The plebeian masses of the time, who witnessed

1. Iḥyā', Vol. I, pp. 37-38.

the solicitations of the kings and disdainful indifference of the devout scholar-jurists, thought that the study of juristic sciences was the easiest way to acquire riches and honour as well as to gain an access into the entourage of the nobility. These elements, therefore, themselves applied for the governmental offices and manoeuvred to win the favour of rulers and administrators in the hope of achieving worldly success. Some of them gained their end while others licked the dust but even those who did succeed had to humble themselves by applying for these offices They had to come down from the exalted place of scholars to that of plebeians Another result of it was that the scholars who were earlier implored to accept these offices began to offer themselves as candidates, earlier they were honoured for their selfless detachment from the ruling circles but now they lost their respect by becoming the henchmen of the kings and rulers. A few scholars were, however, an exception to it in every age.

"The analogical deductions drawn up on legal or theological questions in accordance with the principles of jurisprudence and the teaching of the *Shari'ah*, were needed primarily to meet the requirements of administration and justice during the earlier times. In due course, however, the nobles and administrators too cultivated an interest in these matters and they began to encourage the scholars to discuss theseissues in their presence. In view of the interest taken by the nobility in these discussions, people began to devote themselves to the study of dialectics, numerous treatises came to be written on the science of disputation; rules were evolved for these debates and gradually the wranglings were turned into an art of logical syllogism These persons tried to justify their endeavours on the ground that their aim was to protect the scripture and the *Sunnah* and to oppose the innovations and deviations Those who were earlier engaged in giving legal opinions had also made a similar claim that they intended to serve the faith and the

people by helping them to settle their disputes.

"A few rulers and administrators of the later times, undoubtedly, looked upon the dialectics and disputations with disfavour for they thought that these polemics gave rise to academic orthodoxy and quarrelsome disputes, and not unoften even to violent strife and blood-shed. On the other hand, there were also nobles and chiefs desirous of finding out which of the two schools of Islamic jurisprudence, Hanafite or Shafe^cite, was nearer to the right path. These elements encouraged discussions and debates on juristic issues. The scholars belonging to their entourage, accordingly, put aside all the dialectical quibblings on other issues and took up the controversies between these two juristic schools, overlooking the differences of opinion between other jurists such as Mālik ibn Anas, Sufyān Thauri and Ahmad ibn Hanbal, simply because their masters were not interested in their differences Laying a claim to the refinement and amplification the *corpus juris* of Islamic law, and to formulation of the principles of analogical deduction, these scholars compiled innumerable dissertations on the subject, cultivated logical syllogism and developed it into a science of ratiocination They are still preoccupied with this vocation and only God knows to what extent they would go. Thus, the reason for undue interest taken by the scholars in these controversies and contentious reasonings is what we have stated above If the nobility or the powers that be were to take interest in the juristical differences of the schools other than those of Abū Hanīfa and al-Shāfe^cī, these people would immediately start quibbling over the questions relating to those schools. And, they would still claim that their aim is simply to acquire knowledge and to seek the pleasure of God"[1]

After tracing the origin of contentious debates, al-Ghazali sets forth in some detail the ill-effects springing from these

1 *Ihyā*', Vol I, p 38

wranglings. He also describes his own experiences since he had himself earlier taken a keen interest in such polemics.[1]

The vocabulary employed to denote the new sciences then being cultivated was also creating a misunderstanding. Words or phrases occurring in the Qur'ān, Traditions of the Prophet or the sayings or works of his companions were being widely used for the new sciences being evolved in those times. To give a few examples, the word *fiqah* (legal theology) was being commonly used for the intricate and hypothetical details of legal questions as well as for the differences in legal opinions in regard to such issues, *ʿilm* (knowledge) was a common term employed to describe all sorts of learning, religious or secular. The scholasticism or logical syllogism was known as *tawhīd* (Unity of Godhead) *tazkīr* (recollection or act of devotion to God) was the name assigned for all sorts of lectures replete with fantastic tales while *hikmat* (wisdom) denoted occult and uncommon practices. With their indiscriminate use the peculiar sense conveyed by these terms in the context of the Qur'ānic text and the *Sunnah* had come to be associated with these new sciences as well. Thus, the Qur'ānic verse *so that they may understand religion* and the Tradition *God grants understanding of religion to those who intend to be virtuous* were applied to the unforeseeable legal quibblings, the Divine tidings that *those granted wisdom (in religion) have been bestowed a great favour* was appropriated to philosophy and scholasticisms of the fifth century, and the verse of the Qur'ān *remember God, for ye may be one of the devoted* was employed for the vile sermons of the ignorant and misguided preachers. Al-Ghazali explained how these words were being used out of their context to mean something which these terms were never intended to convey. He traced the original meanings of these words and phrases which had not only been lost owing to their misuse but which also differed widely from the sense conveyed during his times.[2] The analysis made by al-Ghazali was as much instructive as it was

1 *Ihyā'*, Vol I, pp 40-43
2 *Ibid*, Vol I, pp 28-34

helpful in removing the misconceived notions created by the careless and indiscriminate use of religious terminology which was being employed as a vehicle for the furtherance of the new sciences.

Critique of the Rulers and Kings :

Al-Ghazali held that alongwith the religious scholars, kings and rulers, administrators and nobles were also responsible for the widespread moral and spiritual degeneration of the people ʿAbdullah ibn Mubārak had also expressed the same feeling in regard to the kings and nobles two hundred years before al-Ghazali in his famous verse saying

> "And who pollutes religion excepting the kings, nobles and the priestly order ?"

Unmindful of his personal safety al-Ghazali stood up against the unjust ways of the powerful despots and autocratic rulers who considered themselves above every law It was a common practice amongst the scholars in those days to accept donations or stipends granted by the then kings Al-Ghazali was, however, courageous enough to denounce these awards as unlawful He declared that these grants were, at best, doubtful and at worst, prohibited He writes

> "The revenues accruing to the kings these days are mostly prohibited, for they seldom have a lawful income, or, if they have any, it is only paltry "[1]

Again he says

> "The income of the kings in our times is either entirely prohibited or its major portion comes under this category. There is nothing surprising in it because we find now-a-days no trace of the lawful sources like the poor-due, spoils of war, etc. No income from these sources generally reaches the king. Among the lawful sources, only poll-tax remains now, but numerous unjust means are employed in the recovery of these dues, which are not

1. *Iḥyā'*, Vol II, p. 120

> allowed by the *Shari'ah* The officials of the State exceed the prescribed limits both in regard to the amounts to be recovered and the persons to be assessed for the poll-tax The conditions laid down for assessment of this tax are also disregarded. Apart from these sources of income, the coffers of the state are also filled with riches extracted from the Muslims far in excess of the tributes of the lands held by them, confiscations, illegal gratifications and similar other taxes which are collected even more mercilessly than the poll-tax "[1]

Al-Ghazali maintained that since the riches amassed by the kings was either unlawful or at least of a doubtful nature from the view-point of the *Shari'ah,* it was advisable that no grants or donations out of it should be accepted by a scholar Such an income, he held, was not conducive to the spiritual advancement of the recipient He further argued that instances of scholars accepting royal grants in the past could undoubtedly be cited but that was a world altogether different from that of his own times In this connection he writes

> "The despotic rulers of the past, because of being nearer in time to the right-guided Caliphs, were at least conscious of their tyrannical ways and hence they were ever eager to win the favour of the companions of the Prophet and their associates and descendants Since these rulers of the old were anxious that their favours should be accepted by the devout scholars, they made these presentations of their own accord and without any strings attached to their donations They even expressed gratitude for the acceptance of their grants The religious savants, on the other hand, accepted these presentations only to distribute these among the poor and the needy At the same time, these mentors of the old never sided with the rulers in the furtherance of their political ends They never paid visits to kings and chieftains nor did they ever

1 *Ihyā',* Vol II, p. 122

encourage the latter to call upon them. It was not unoften that they warned the kings for their irreligious actions or even cursed them for their tyrannical ways. Thus, these scholars accepted the presentations of the then rulers because there was no danger of any harmful effect to the faith on account of it.

"The kings now-a-days have, however, only such scholars on their pay-rolls whom they hope to win over to their side for certain ulterior motives or those who would be willing to act as their entourages and sing their praises. The vices flowing out of the acceptance of such favour are many: first, the recipient has to endure humiliation; secondly, he has to pay visits to the donor; thirdly, he has to be lavish in his praise for the grantor, fourthly, he is required to help the donor in realising his ends; fifthly, he has to dance attendance on the ruler like other courtiers; sixthly, he has always to express gratitude and assure the donor of his help, and, seventhly, he has to hold his tongue over the tyrannies and misdeeds of the kings. The rulers now-a-days would not extend their help to anybody who is not willing to accept even one of these conditions, no matter whether he be an erudite scholar of al-Shāfeʿī's fame. It is because of these reasons that it is not lawful now for anyone to accept donations from the kings, even if one knows that the latter have derived their income through lawful means. There is thus absolutely no justification for accepting grants out of the revenues which have been mobilised through prohibited or even doubtful means. Now, if anybody still unashamedly accepts the donations from these rulers and quotes the companions of the Prophet and their successors as a precedent, he perhaps considers the angels to be peers of blacksmiths, for, he cannot avoid waiting upon the rulers or even their chiefs and officials and playing second fiddle to them. And, these are all sins.

"I have now explained the sources of lawful and unlawful income accruing to the kings. If, however, anybody

still deems it practicable to obtain a grant drawn out of lawful revenues, and he also deserves the same or gets it without in any way asking for the same or having to please the king or his chieftains, or else the donation does not depend on any service to be rendered in return thereof, then it may be lawful to accept the same, but I would still advise that it is preferable to refuse it if only on account of the evils likely to follow in the wake of its acceptance."[1]

Al-Ghazali did not merely advice to forsake the donations and grants from the kings, he went even further to stress that one ought completely to disassociate oneself with them and hate their tyrannical and despotic ways. He writes in the *Ihya'*:

"Secondly, one should be so completely cut off from the kings that he may never come across them. It is obligatory and, indeed, safety lies in it that one should hate them for their tyranny. He should never entreat God's blessings for them nor praise them, nor else seek acquintance of their courtiers One should not even desire to know anything about them."[2]

We are living in a democratic age when freedom of speech and expression is more or less assured in almost every country of the world. It is rather difficult to visualise the amount of courage al-Ghazali had had to muster, and the grave danger to which he exposed himself by openly preaching disassociation with the rulers or advising refusal of their grants, and criticising them for their tyrannical and un-Islamic policies in the social, political and fiscal matters. For the despotic and autocratic rulers, as the kings generally were in those days, even the slightest criticism of the state or its policies or officials was a sufficient mark of treason, and the heads of eminent scholars and reputed personages rolled on the ground at the slightest displeasure of those tyrants. However, throwing all considerations of personal safety to the winds, al-Ghazali preached

1 *Ihya'*, Vol II, pp 122-123
2 *Ibid* Vol II, p 128

and practised what he considered to be right and never faltered from the duty of severely admonishing the arrogant kings of his time. Sultan Sanjar, the son of Seljukid King Malik Shah, was the Governor of Khurasān. Once al-Ghazali happened to see him in his court. Addressing Sanjar, he said before his courtiers:

> "It is indeed regrettable that the necks of the Muslims are breaking under the crushing burden of thy tyranny, while those of thy horses are over burdened with expensive harness."[1]

Muhammad, the elder brother of Sanjar, succeeded his father Malik Shah. Al-Ghazali wrote a detailed letter in the form of a treatise exhorting him to inculcate the awe of God, fulfil his obligations as a king and work for the betterment of his people.

Administration was generally in the hands of ministers in the times of al-Ghazali. He, therefore, paid more attention to them than to the Seljukid kings for bringing about reforms in administration. He wrote detailed letters and directives inviting their attention to the mismanagement, maladministration, inefficiency, illegal exhortions and high handedness of the State officials. Al-Ghazali reminded them of their responsibility before God and invited their attention towards the fate earlier tyrannical rulers and administrators had met, as a consequence of their oppressive administrative policies. The letters written by al-Ghazali to the then ministers of Seljukid kings mirror his personal courage, the desire for exposition of truth and effectiveness of his pungent mode of expression.

In one of his letters to a Minister, Fakhar ul-Mulk, he wrote:

> "You should know that this city (Tūs) had been laid waste by famine and tyranny. Everyone was scared by the news of your presence in Safra'in and Damaghān; cultivators sold their produce and hooligans behaved nicely with the populace. Now that you are far away, the fear has taken flight from these elements. The bully has again taken heart and the farmers and grocers are

1. *Al-Ghazali*, p. 24.

indulging in black-marketing Anybody sending you a report contrary to what I have stated is not your well-wisher. . . Verily, the solemn invocation of the oppressed in Tūs would surely be answered by the Lord I counselled the Governor of Tūs but he did not pay any heed to me until an example was made out of him by the divine justice . . . My solemn admonitions would undoubtedly appear distasteful to you but I would not have dared to write this letter, if I had not cast away all temptations of earthly favours out of my heart Pay heed to me for you would not be counselled like this by anyone after me Only those can admonish you who do not allow their selfishness to conceal the Truth."[1]

In a letter to Mujīr ud-dīn, another minister, he says

"Now that the tyranny has reached its limits, it has become incumbent on you to succour the oppressed I was a witness to this state of affairs for a year or so, I then migrated from Tūs in order to avoid casting a glance over those ignoble oppressors Now that I have returned to Tūs, I find that the oppression is still continuing."[2]

After inviting the attention of Mujīr ud-dīn to the despicable fate met by earlier ministers, al-Ghazali continues

"The ministers, before you, met a fate which none had met before them But now I see oppression and destruction which I had never witnessed earlier. You may not be pleased with this state of affairs but when these oppressors will be called up on the Day of Requital, everyone responsible for their tyranny, even in the remotest possible way, will be asked to render an explanation for it The Muslims of this place are extremely aggrieved The officials have collected quite a substantial amount from the populace, many times more than the money sent by you for distribution among the poor, but it has not been remitted

1 *Maktūbāt*, pp. 36-38
2 *Ibid*, pp 62-63

to the king. These people have misappropriated the entire amount."[1]

Other Classes of the Muslim Society :

Al-Ghazali had also made a deep study of the religious and moral life of the other sections of society besides the scholars, kings and chieftains. He has left a detailed description of numerous innovations and deviations, customs and rites, in short, all aspects of mundane life which had somehow or the other found a place in the life of the different sections of the then society. It is remarkable that apart from being a profound scholar of religion, al-Ghazali was also such a keen observer of social life that no aspect of the life of the people escaped his attention. He has devoted one section of the *Ihyā'* to such customs as violate the dictates of the *Sharīʿah* although they do not apparently seem to do so. In this section he leaves untouched no aspect of individual or social life—from the mosque to the market and from the baths to the social gatherings—and enumerates the practices which are prohibited and ought to be given up.[2]

Another section of the book deals with those people who were suffering from one or the other misconceived notions which impeded the improvement of their character. This section is concerned with the people who were suffering from different types of self-deceptions, weaknesses, fallacies, illusions and paradoxes. The survey includes the affluent, nobles, scholars, mystics and similar other classes of rank and distinction, exhibiting a keen insight into their mental and emotional life which can be expected from an expert psychologist only. His study reveals the elements of misgivings and illusions of which the people concerned would have themselves been hardly aware

The scholars in al-Ghazali's time had generally developed an extremism in the cultivation and practice of their different branches of learning which had obscured from their view the

1 *Maktūbāt*, p. 67.

2. *Ihyā'*, Vol II, pp 294-299.

essence of the true faith. Jurists were stretching their legal quibblings too far to include all sorts of futile juristic issues, dialecticians deemed it worthwhile to engage in specious reasoning and irrelevant polemics, traditionists busied themselves with unnecessary researches into the terms and phrases used in the Traditions and their derivatives; while mystics considered it an act of devotion to commit the writings of their masters to memory. Al-Ghazali vigorously criticised all these people and brought out succinctly the misconceptions under which they were labouring. Summing up the discussion in this regard he writes:

> "The secular sciences pertaining to mathematics, medicine and other useful arts do not produce so much self-deception among their students as is born out of the religious sciences. This is because nobody ever thinks of these branches of learning as a means of attaining salvation in the Hereafter; whereas, the study of religious sciences is itself, apart from its aim and the ultimate result desired of it, very often taken as leading to salvation."[1]

Alongwith the religious scholars, al-Ghazali brought the pious and the mystics too under the focus of his criticism. In high-lighting their mistakes and misconceptions, self-deceptions and the show of assumed piety, al-Ghazali disclosed how a number of devotional practices were really unimportant and worthless, and that the motive behind several of these devotional acts was not a sincere desire to serve God but simply to satisfy one's ownself or others, or else to seek respect and honour.[2]

Turning to the affluent and well-to-do sections of the society al-Ghazali has made certain pertinent observations of far-reaching importance:

> "There are many amongst the men of substance who are too liberal in spending their wealth on the performance of *Hajj*. They set out for the pilgrimage regularly year after year as if they have none hungry or in want amongst

1. *Ihyā'*, Vol III, p 343
2. *Ibid*, Vol III, pp 345-350

their neighbours. ʿAbdullah ibn Masʿūd truly said that during the later times quite a large number of persons would perform the *Hajj* unnecessarily, simply because they would find it easy to travel and would have enough to spend, but they would return from the *Hajj* without any recompense for they would not help their fellow-travellers whom they would find in trouble.

"Abū Nasr Tammār relates that somebody informed Bishr ibn al-Harith of his intention to set out for the *Hajj*. Bishr asked, 'What have you got to meet the expenses ?'

The man replied, 'Two thousand *dirhams*.'

'And what is the purpose of your journey', demanded Bishr again, 'Do you want to make a show of your piety, visit the Kaʿaba or seek the pleasure of God ?'

He replied, 'To seek the pleasure of God.'

'All right', said Bishr, 'but would you agree, if I tell you a method whereby you would attain the pleasure of God without having to go all the way for *Hajj* ? You would undoubtedly spend the money you have, but you would also be satisfied that you have done something that would be liked by the Lord '

After the man had given his assent Bishr told him, 'Then you should distribute the amount you have set aside for the *Hajj* among ten insolvent persons so that they may be able to pay off their debts, or to paupers who may live on it, or to the orphans or persons in indigent circumstances. If you like, you may give the entire amount to a single person because rendering help to the poor or the needy or any one in trouble is better than performing a hundred voluntary *Hajjs*. Now you should do as I have told you but if you have any hesitation, tell me about it.'

'The truth is', the man rejoined, 'that I want to undertake the journey.'

Bishr smiled and remarked: 'When the money is obtained from prohibited or doubtful sources, the insinuating-self of man urges him to gratify its desires which it

often brings forth in the garb of virtuous acts to deceive him God Almighty has, however, decided that He would accept the deeds of only those who fear him "[1]

"Another group among the moneyed but niggardly persons is more interested in such devotional acts on which nothing is to be spent They like to keep fasts, offer prayers or recite the Qur'ān These persons too are deceiving themselves because stinginess has captured their souls They ought to spend their money in order to cure themselves of the malady but they keep themselves busy in the acts which are really not required of them These elements are like the man who is about to be bitten by a snake and of which he would undoubtedly die, but he keeps himself busy in preparing a syrup for relieving his cough These miserly persons do not stand in need of the aforesaid devotional acts as that foolish man would not be cured of the snake-bite by his syrup Once somebody told Bishr that a certain wealthy person was profusely keeping fasts and offering prayers He replied, 'The poor fellow is doing the work of others but has given up his own He was required to feed the hungry and help the poor Instead, he is forcing his ownself to remain hungry and is trying to help himself by offering voluntary prayers Along with this, he is also busy in accumulating as much wealth as possible so as to exclude the poor from it'."[2]

In regard to another self-deception from which people generally suffer, al-Ghazali says

"There are still others, both among the well-to-do and the poor, who are victims of self-deception for they consider it sufficient enough to attend the religious discourses and sermons They regularly attend such gatherings and think that it is propitious to listen to these discourses even without acting on the counsel of the preachers These

1 *Ihyā'*, Vol III, pp 351-352

2 *Ibid*, Vol III, p. 352

persons are deceiving themselves because the merit of these sermons lies simply in their exhortation to adopt the righteous course But if the sermons create no urge for virtuous action, then they are simply valueless Anything used as a means for achieving an end has importance because of its objective and if it cannot somehow be helpful in achieving the object, it becomes worthless. But these persons are led astray by the merit of listening to such discourses, unduly emphasised by certain preachers. Often such listeners are found in a melting mood or even in a flood of tears during the discourses but they never make up their mind to tread the righteous path. If these persons are told something dreadful, they begin to implore God and seek His protection, but they appear to think that it is all they need to propitiate the Lord. It is nothing but self-deception Such a person is like a patient who consults the physician simply to gain knowledge of the prescription but he can never regain his health by it. Or, else, he resembles one who is hungry but cannot fill his belly merely by learning the name of different types of edibles.

"Being attentive to the preachers and hearing the details of doctrines and devotional practices would likewise be of no avail in the life-to-come unless it makes you change your life and pattern it in a manner that it may inculcate awe and remembrance of God. If the sermons do not produce this effect and do not make you weary of this-worldliness, then these will be produced as an evidence against you in the Hearafter. Verily, if you think that simply listening to these sermons would be enough for your salvation, you are deceiving yourself."[1]

Purpose of the Ihyā᾽

Ihyā᾽ ᶜUlūm id-Dīn is not merely a book of criticism. One of the objectives underlying this book is to reform and Islamise the

1 *Ihyā᾽*, Vol III, p 352

Muslim society. Al-Ghazali really intended to produce a work which might be self-sufficient not only for the education and discipline of the seekers after truth but that it might also be an adequate guide-book for the educators and preachers, serve as an encyclopædia of Islamic sciences and may be used as a manual of injunctions for the Islamic way of life. He succeeded in making the book a compendium of Islamic beliefs and practices, measures required for purification of the soul, disciplines of moral conduct and cultivation of a mystical awareness of the truth. The book also presents an striking example of its effectiveness. Many of us would have shared the experience of Shibli Naᶜomani who says that "every word of this book has a magnetic effect on its reader, it takes hold of him and pulls the strings of his heart. This over bearing effect of the *Ihya*ᵓ is perhaps because it was written by al-Ghazali at a time when he was himself filled and deeply impressed with a feeling of higher awakening."[1]

The inner experience of unseen realities giving an insight into the higher realms, through which al-Ghazali had himself passed, and which is reflected in the *Ihya*ᵓ, sometimes makes its readers disenchanted with the world It creates a longing for solitude and penitence, contemplation and devotion and produces an awe and reverence of God peculiar to the mystic way of life which is often harmful for the health. The writer of these pages has himself experienced these feelings while going through the *Ihya*ᵓ for the compilation of this book It is perhaps for this reason that the mentors of mystic disciplines do not advise the novices to go through the *Ihya*ᵓ in initial stages. Perfect moderation and temperance can indeed be had only through the study of the Traditions and the biography of the Prophet and the company of a religious teacher who has modelled his life in accordance with the teachings of the *Shariᶜah*

Ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazali:

Besides being an eminent scholar, jurist, dialectician and a

1. *Al-Ghazali*, p 49

mystic, al-Ghazali was also a propounder of the Islamic ethics. His studies in ethical philosophy fathom the mystries of head and heart and exhibit a penetrating insight into the eternal values of life. In fact al-Ghazali has left such an indelible mark on the subsequent thought that no study of Islamic ethics and ethical philosophy can be deemed complete without a mention of al-Ghazali's thought and his writings on the subject.[1] The *Ihyā'* is a masterpiece of al-Ghazali on this subject too in which he, like a true thinker, sets out to examine the innate psychological dispositions and impulses actuating ethical behaviour.

Yearning for Honour (Jāh):

Under the caption "Why man has a natural longing for honour (Jāh) and why it seldom leaves even the heart of a penitent," al-Ghazali writes in the *Ihyā'*

> "One must know that exactly for the same reason which makes wealth dearer to man, he inculcates the love of *Jāh* Just as gold is liked more than silver, even if the two be of the same value, *Jāh* claims precedence over riches As you know, gold and silver have no attraction in themselves for these can neither satisfy hunger nor can be put on. these are just as good as any other metal, but these have an allurement because they serve as a means of satisfying the desires held dearer by man Similar is the case with *Jāh* which means winning and dominating the heart of others
>
> "However, despite the fact that *Jāh* and wealth equally share the fancy of man, the former claims precedence over the other for reasons more than one. There are three conspicuous reasons for it. The first of these is that *Jāh* can be a means for attaining riches while the latter may not be helpful in commanding the respect of others. Anybody winning the hearts of others wins their services and

1 *Tārikh ul-Akhlāq*, p 200, also see *Falsafatul Akhlāq*

belongings too as people are always desirous of making presentations to those whom they love and revere On the other hand, if an undistinguished plebeian somehow gets hold of a treasure, he cannot win the respect of others merely by getting rich *Jāh* is, thus held dearer than wealth.

"Another obvious reason is that there is always a danger of losing wealth It can be stolen or taken away forcibly, kings and tyrants can confiscate it It also needs to be guarded and kept in boxes and strong-rooms, but once a man wins the heart of anyone, there is no danger of its being lost to thieves, robbers, or plunderers It is indeed the most well-guarded treasure The treasure of heart, on the other hand, is immune from all these dangers

"The third reason for holding *Jāh* dearer is that it goes on increasing by itself without requiring any effort to be made for it When people begin to venerate anyone on account of his knowledge or virtuous actions, they sing his praise thereby widening the circle of his followers It is thus only natural that everybody should hanker after fame and honour When the fame spreads to other towns and lands, the number of admirers too increases with it As against this, wealth does not increase by itself. These are the manifest reasons for giving preference to *Jāh* over wealth One can also find many other reasons for it

"Now, it can be argued that if what I have explained here is correct a man should like to have riches or *Jāh* only to the extent of fulfilling his desires or meeting his wants, for, he holds these dear only for achieving these ends But, the fact is that the covetousness of man knows no bounds and he goes on accumulating possessions and riches till the limits of his needs are left far behind and he presents the spectacle of one alluded to in the Tradition which says *If a man has two valleys filled with gold, he would long for the third.* Similarly, a man is always anxious that his *Jāh* should go on increasing till his fame reaches the far off

lands, although he knows that he would never step into those countries and meet their inhabitants

"The answer to the question posed earlier is that, in truth and reality, love of *Jāh* produces an intoxication which can hardly be eradicated There are two reasons for this. One of these is manifest and can be conceived by everyone But the other one being related to a peculiar trait of the human-self, is so subtle and latent that it would be difficult even for the most intelligent to grasp it fully It can be understood only by those who are endowed by the brilliance of mind and have a deep insight into the psychological nature of man

"The first of the two causes is that man always feels an innate uneasiness on account of the fears and doubts in regard to that which he holds dear and accordingly wants to ward off all dangers, real or imaginary, from it As a poet has said · 'To fall in love is to fall in a thousand anxieties'

"Man is never satisfied, no matter whatever provisions he has made to meet his necessities The doubt that he might lose his possessions, later on, always assails his heart and this makes him sad and anxious This anxiety can be removed only in case he gets something which can be a substitute for the possessions which he fears to lose Again, on account of his self-love and eagerness for a long life, he overestimates his necessities for the future, and wants adequate resources to counterbalance the imaginary perils to his means. He is always worried about the supposed hazards which might make him lose his resources The only effective remedy he can think of against these risks is to have so much estate and effects that if he somehow loses a part of it, he may be able to manage easily with the remaining assets left with him The doubt and fear in regard to future security never allow him to be content with his existing belongings and he yields to the desire of possessing the fortunes of the entire world The Prophet

of Islam has very rightly said that the longing for two things viz., for knowledge and wealth is never satisfied The desire for *Jāh* or winning the hearts of men is also insatiable precisely for the same reason.

"Another reason, and a more cogent one than the first, is that the Spirit is a command by God. The Qur'ān says. *They will ask thee concerning the Spirit. Say. The Spirit is by command of my Lord*[1] The command by the Lord means that it is a secret which can be experienced by the illuminated masters through beatific visions but cannot be divulged. The Prophet of Islam too did not disclose the reality of Spirit but, without going into its reality, one can find out that the heart of man has four-fold predispositions The first of these is a beastly inclining towards eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, etc. The second pertains to what may be called a ferocious leaning towards killing, injuring and hurting others The third element of human nature is devilish having a predisposition towards deceit and fraud Along with these propensities, there is another one relating to the divine nature of man which seeks expression in the divine attributes like beneficence, dignity, grandeur, respect and glory The heart of man has numerous similar predispositions which cannot be gone into in any detail here, but, as stated, one of the important inclinations of the heart, owing to the Spirit being a command by the Lord, pertains to the quality of perfection. And, what this perfection is? It consists of being unrivalled in perfection and owning an existence not dependent on another for anything

"Man is thus naturally inclined towards perfection since it is a divine quality—a quality which does not admit of any peer or rival, for that would really constitute a defect in perfection The perfection of the sun lies in the fact that it is the only sun Likewise, the perfection

1 *Bani Isrāīl*, 85

of *Being* is enjoyed by God Almighty alone for there is no perfect *Being* besides Him Whatever exists besides Him is simply His creation and cannot exist on its own. Thus, in very truth, nothing exists without God, for, sharing any quality with Him presupposes an equality which is a defect for the unrivalled perfection of God Almighty Just as the sun illuminates everything in this world without losing its perfection, God also bestows existence to everything. It is on Him that the existence of everything depends in this universe Unrivalled perfection is thus a divine attribute to which man has a natural predisposition Some of the mystics have observed that in the recesses of his heart everyman nourishes the same feeling which found expression from Pharaoh when he said *I am your Lord, Most High* It is because of this reason that man finds it more pleasing to become an object of homage and reverence than to become himself a devotee or a worshipper This is a natural human instinct which is alluded to in the divine revelation which says that the *Spirit is by command of my Lord*

"Man cannot, however, attain absolute or unrivalled perfection, but his desire for it persists because he derives a sort of satisfaction from it Absolute perfection is the end and not the means of achieving anything else. The fact is that every man adores his self as well as its absolute perfection, he shudders at the idea of death simply because he sees the annihilation of his self and of its perfection in his death Absolute perfection, on the one hand, demands complete independence from every thing for its existence and, on the other, dependence of every other existence on it If, however, that be not possible, the next best course desired by it is to dominate others Man desiring complete perfection has, thus, a natural inclination towards predominance over others Domination over others is gratifying to the self and a means of achieving perfection. It consists of the capacity to be effective and the ability to make others

change their will. Accordingly, man wants to dominate over every other being but the latter consists of objects, some of which do not admit of any change in accordance with the human will, as, for instance, the Supreme Being and His attributes. There is another category of objects which undergoes change but not in conformity with the human desire, and these are the heavens, planets, angels, *jinn*, devils, mountains, oceans, and the like. The objects falling in the third category such as land, its elements, minerals, plants, animals and also the hearts of men, are liable to change under the influence of human will. Now, the objects of the first two categories being outside the scope of human influence, man endeavours to acquire knowledge of these objects, for, acquiring the knowledge of anything is also a means of gaining domination over it. You see the keenness of some people to have an insight into the reality of the nature and attributes of God, angels, heavens, planets, stars, oceans and their wonders. This is also a way of acquiring some domination over these. You would have seen that if a man cannot himself manufacture something that catches his fascination, he wants at-least to know how it had been made because this gives him some satisfaction. A man who cannot himself invent a game like chess or any other device, wants atleast to know how it is played or used and how it was invented. He finds his ignorance vexatious and the knowledge enchanting since he wants to make up some of his own deficiency through his knowledge.

"Of the earthly things over which man desires predominance in order to utilise them according to his wishes, there are two sub-divisions, firstly, those pertaining to body, and, secondly, those belonging to spirit. The first comprises possessions and belongings, wealth and resources on which man wants complete domination. He wants complete authority to use these in whatever manner he desires because authority is necessary for perfection

dominance is one of the attributes of God reflecting His qualities of overlordship, paternalism, etc. Man has a natural inclination to hold these dear to his heart no matter whether he ever needs them for meeting his personal requirements or not. Similarly, man wants to have slaves, who would be under his domination, or to force even free people to accept his predominance, so that he may command their homage and services. It is not necessary that he should always win over their hearts because domination by force is more often as much effective as winning over the heart of a man It is, therefore, natural that man sometimes desires to attain predominance through brute force because it expresses his authority over others—an attribute of perfection to which man is predisposed.

"The most precious of all earthly possessions, then, falling under the second category, is the domination and winning over the hearts of men The perfection of domination lies in the authority exercised by a man over the hearts of others who are ever willing to comply with his bidding The hearts of men can best be dominated by creating love and reverence which is born out of a conviction about the perfection of qualities in the person adored, for, perfection of qualities is a divine attribute to which man has an inherent inclination The heart of man, therefore, desires to attain perfection either through knowledge or authority Riches and *Jāh*, being the two potent means of acquiring this authority, are cherished by the heart of man. And, since knowledge and authority are limitless, man endeavours to gain knowledge of everything and command authority over every existence As the Prophet has alluded to the dissatisfaction of the learned and the wealthy—the desire of man for domination over things beyond his authority—ever goes on increasing "[1]

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1 Abbreviated from *Iḥyā'*, Vol III, pp 241-244

Critique of the Self:

The most effective part of the *Ihyā'* is where al-Ghazali expounds the significance of purifying one's own soul and reforming the morals for achieving blessedness. His exposition covers the fleeting nature of the terrestrial world, eternity of the world-to-come, significance of the faith and righteous action, cleansing of the spirit and eradication of the vices of heart which he deems to be the inner bases of all grossness in human conduct. The graphic description of the vices and virtues by al-Ghazali and his exhortation for adoption of the course leading to salvation bear the mark of an eloquent speaker, a prudent mentor and a philosopher with an incisiveness of intellect and a penetrating insight into the inner recesses of human soul, mind and spirit. He is fully aware of the different types of human weaknesses and delineates each of these, sets forth their causes and traces their origin, and thereafter proceeds to suggest measures for subjugation of the earthly appetites and impulses out of which these vices are born. The treatment of the ethical issues by al-Ghazali does not produce a mere religious discourse. His essays are inspiring, employing a rich and expressive language which has since cast its spell over hundreds and thousands of people and reformed their lives. The fourth section of the book deals explicitly with the critique of the Self and the method of self-examination. He tells us how one should make an assessment of one's own vices and inclinations towards it, and prepare oneself for the life-to-come. Under the caption "Self-criticism" al-Ghazali writes:

> "O' *Nafs* (Self), is it the right course that when a Jew tells thee that a certain thing is injurious for thy health, thou dost not take it and preferest to curb thy desire, but, thou completely disregardest the commands of Divine revelation and the directives of the prophets whose truthfulness is established by miracles? Is it not surprising that thou attachest more weight to the opinion of that Jew although he is liable to form an erroneous opinion on account of his limited knowledge or wisdom? Thou throwest away thy garment without the slightest hesitation,

if even a child informs thee that a scorpion has got into thy clothes. Is it that the tidings of the prophets, scholars, saints and the mentors about the life-to-come, the Hell and its blazing fire, its torments, its bitter thorn, its scorpions and reptiles do not deserve even as much credence as the information given by a child? Or, is it that the reptiles of the Hell shall cause thee lesser pain than the sting of an earthly scorpion which gives thee trouble for a day or even for a shorter period? This is certainly, not the way dictated by prudence If the beasts were to know of thy foolishness, they would laugh at thee.

"O' *Nafs*, thou knowest what is to happen after death and hast also a faith in the life-to-come, but thou still dost not want to act righteously and desirest to ignore the Hereafter. Death is marking time to come upon thee and impound thy soul without any warning Even if a hundred years were given, one shall never reach the destination, if one discontinues the journey to bask in the sunshine. And, what dost thou think of a man who goes abroad for acquiring knowledge but continues to postpone his studies in the hope that he would learn everything within the last few months before returning home? Thou wouldst, undoubtedly, laugh at this man since he hopes to acquire all knowledge and wisdom in such a short time, as also on a man who cherishes a desire to be appointed as a jurist without studying law. If thou hast presumed that the endeavours made during the old age are more fruitful, then, how dost thou think that this is not the last day of thy life? Why dost thou not then address thyself to the task just now? Has God told thee that He would allow thee some more time to make preparations for thy salvation? If not, then what is it that is preventing thee from making haste and prompting thee to postpone thy decision indefinitely? There is no other reason save that thou art finding it difficult to subjugate thy impulses and earthly desires, for that would involve an effort on thy part Dost

thou, then, wait for that day when it would be made easier for every man to conquer his desires? Verily, such a day shall never come since God has not created it at all The Paradise being surrounded by things unpleasant and unwelcome, shall never be agreeable to the indolent self which always wants to postpone the day's work to the next day Dost thou know how many tomorrows have been turned into yesterdays would it not be even harder to accomplish tomorrow what cannot be done today? Take the instance of the passion for sex If it is not curbed today, it cannot be rooted out tomorrow, or else, it is like a tree which a man wants to uproot but being unsuccessful in his attempt, postpones the task for the future. This man knows it well that with the passage of time, the tree will take root more firmly while he will become older and grow weaker Obviously, this man would not be able to accomplish in his old age what he could not do in the prime of his youth. To put a bridle on the passions is really as difficult and troublesome as to train a wolf.

"O' *Nafs*, thou appearest not to know these facts of common experience but claimest to be wise and prudent! Verily, there appears to be none more foolish than thee! Thy passions, thou mightest plead, do not allow thee to be steadfast in virtue while the troubles and afflictions make thee abandon the path of patience. If this is correct, why dost thou not seek the pleasure that is everlasting, pure and sublime, and which can be had in the celestial Abode of Bliss alone. If thou art a slave of thy desires and mad after pleasure, it is even more desirable for thee to curb thy fleeting predilections, for sometimes one morsel taken by a man prevents him from taking his food for days together. Suppose a patient has been directed by his physician not to take cold water for three days so that he might recover from illness Now, tell me, what does thy intellect dictate? Should this man abstain from cold drink for three days to regain his health or, should he,

disregarding the result, satisfy his craving for cold water? Dost thou not know that the pitifully short duration of life vouchsafed to thee in this transient world is relatively even more short-lived, when compared to the eternal life in the Hereafter, than the three days of that patient as compared with the rest of his life? Is it that the endurance required for controlling the earthly passions is more agonising than the torments of indefinite duration in different portals of the Hell? How wouldst thou be able to put up with that everlasting torture when thou findest it so distasteful to bear this temporary unpleasantness?

"I find that thou art unable to restrain thyself just for two reasons. The first of these is a sort of concealed infidelity while the other is nothing but stupidity. Thy concealed infidelity comprises lack of conviction about the Day of Requital and recompense of thy deeds in the world-to-come Thy stupidity, on the other hand, makes thee oblivious of the designs of God and asks thee to depend upon His mercy disregardful of the fact that the benefits conferred on the obstinate sinners are really snares to trap them. Still, thou wouldst not trust His beneficence for a piece of bread or a handful of grains nor follow even the express commands enjoined by Him! The Prophet has said: *Prudent is he who resorts to self-criticism and endeavours to prepare for the life after death while stupid is he who allows his self to take after the ways of flesh and still remain hopeful of divine favour.* Alas, thou shouldst have been aware of the snare of thy passions and shouldst not have allowed thyself to be duped by the Satan. Thou hast been asked to take care of thyself and be charitable unto thee. Thou shouldst not waste the sojourn of thy life in this transient world. If thou losest a moment of this life, thou wilt lose a substantial portion of thy fortune in the Hereafter, which can never be regained. Therefore, take advantage of thy health before thou fallest ill, of the recess before thou art pre-occupied; of the riches before thy indigence; of the youthful zest

(the creation and the raising of) a single soul Lo! Allah is Hearer, Knower.[1]

As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it.[2]

As He brought you into being, so return ye (unto Him)[3] "[4]

Critics of the Ihyā':

Ibn Taymiyah's verdict on the *Ihyā'* is that on the whole it is a well-written book employing an elegant style[5] At the same time, Ibn Taymiyah criticises it for four reasons The first of these is that al-Ghazali's thought shows definite traces of Greek philosophy In delineating the Unity of God, prophethood and the final recompense al-Ghazali has, maintains Ibn Taymiyah, introduced numerous concepts which were held by the then philosophers Even if al-Ghazali opposed the philosophers, he gave scholasticism a philosophical foundation. Ibn Taymiyah being emphatically opposed to philosophy found some of the writings of al-Ghazali unplausible from a purely religious view-point

The second ground for criticism of the *Ihyā'* is that al-Ghazali employs a syllogism which is not fully in keeping with the spirit of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* The third reason given by Ibn Taymiyah is that the book contains many concepts and teachings of those treading the path of mysticism and their claims in regard to gaining insight into the divine truth Ibn Taymiyah disagrees with al-Ghazali in regard to the latter's views on mysticism. The fourth reason for disagreement of Ibn Taymiyah is that the *Ihyā'* contains many Traditions of doubtful authenticity.[6] Despite these shortcomings pointed out by him, Ibn Taymiyah writes about the *Ihyā'*:

> "Notwithstanding these defects, the *Ihyā'* contains the teachings of numerous illuminated mentors and mystics, and their experiences in regard to the purification of self

1 *Luqmān*, 28
2 *Al-Anbiya*, 104
3 *Al-A'raf*, 29
4 *Ihyā'* Vol IV, pp 356-358
5 *Fatāwah*, Vol II, p 194 ·
6 *Fatāwah* Vol II, p 194 and *At-Taj al-Makallal*, p 388

and the intuitive knowledge, which are identical with the canons of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* and can thus be acceptable from a theological point of view It is because of this reason that the scholars hold different opinions about the *Ihyā'* and all of them are not opposed to it "[1]

Ibn al-Jawzi has also criticised al-Ghazali for making use of unauthentic and weak Traditions He is of the opinion that this was because al-Ghazali was not a traditionist.[2] Hafiz Zain ud-din al-ʿIraqi later collected all the Traditions mentioned in the *Ihyā'* and classified these according to the accepted norms and examined the authenticity or otherwise of each Tradition. Ibn al-Jawzi has also pointed out certain mistakes made by al-Ghazali in regard to the historical events mentioned by him in the *Ihyā'* Al-Ghazali was, however, not a scholar of history or Traditions.[3]

Ibn al-Jawzi maintains that al-Ghazali has mentioned several examples of mystics or the methods resorted to by them for penance and self-purification which cannot be held permissible under the *Sharīʿah*, much less to be recommended for being followed by the people.[4] Ibn al-Jawzi, however, acknowledges the effectiveness of the *Ihyā'* and the valuable contribution it has made to the subsequent Islamic thought. He has also summarised the *Ihyā'* in a book entitled *Minhāj ul-Qāsidīn* (Path of the Truth-seekers) in which he has deleted the portions objectionable from his point of view This work of Ibn al-Jawzi, however, lacks the inspiration and effectiveness so characteristic of the *Ihyā'*

Al-Ghazali and Dialectics :

A man of al-Ghazali's outstanding intellectual gifts could not continue to tread the beaten path of earlier dialecticians nor could he be content with the position of a mere commentator. Unfortunately, the science of dialectics, which had been evolved for the defence of religion and which had to keep itself abreast

1 *Fatāwah*, Vol II, p 194
2 *Al-Muntazam*, Vol IX, pp 169-170
3 *Ibid*, Vol IX, p 170
4 *Ibid*, Vol IX, p 169

with the current developments in other branches of learning, had lost its vigour by the end of the fourth century The Ashᶜarites of the time had taken to the path of rigid dogmatism insisting on the acceptance of not simply their tenets and beliefs but also the canons devised by al-Ashᶜari and Abū-Bakr Baqillānī without the slightest modification or improvement They considered it heretical to employ a logical syllogism not used by the earlier teachers of their school for the defence of religion Al-Ghazali pressed his knowledge of philosophy for upholding the religious beliefs and dogmas and, indeed, devised entirely new canons for rational exposition of these matters which were more effective than the arguments of the Ashᶜarites In regard to the matters like divine attributes, prophethood, miracles, religious practices, punishments and rewards in the Hereafter, and the Day of Requital he brought forth entirely new arguments, more convincing to a rational mind, than those employed by his predecessors He did, in fact, lay the foundations of a scientific scholastic system, thus infusing a new blood in the old Ashᶜarite school The modified doctrines of the Ashᶜarite school eventually became, thanks to al-Ghazali, the most popular system of scholasticism in the entire Islamic world, but, since al-Ghazali held divergent views from al-Ashᶜari and other eminent scholars of that school on several issues, many ardent followers of the Ashᶜarite school looked down upon al-Ghazali's thought with misgivings and disfavour Some of the Ashᶜarite zealots even accused al-Ghazali of breaking away from the orthodox faith and adopting heretical tenets After the compilation of the *Ihyā'*, the Ashᶜarite scholars became so critical of al-Ghazali that one of his friends wrote a letter to invite his attention towards the matter Al-Ghazali explained the position in some detail in a booklet with the title *Faisal at-Tafarraqa Bain al-Islam wal-Zandaqa* He writes in it

> "Dear brother, a group of people envious of me is busy in censuring my writings, for, in their opinion I have expounded views contrary to those held by the teachers of the old, or the founders of the scholastic school They think that even the slightest deviation from the orthodox Ashᶜarite

Personal experience and a comprehensive insight into the speculative as well as religious sciences led al-Ghazali to the conclusion that scholasticism has only a limited utility which may sometimes be even harmful in particular cases He ultimately came to regard dialectics as a medicine which should not be administered to the healthy people who needed only adequate nourishment through their food. And, this could be provided amply by the Qur'ān. He maintained that the Qur'ān contained a superior logic as its arguments are quite satisfying to the people possessing common-sense. In his last book entitled *Iljām ul-ʿAwām ʿan-ʿIlm il-kalām* (The Restraining of the commonalty from the Science of Dialectics) al-Ghazali observes.

> "The Qur'ānic arguments are like food which provide nourishment to everyone while the logical system built up by the dialecticians is similar to a medicine which can be administered profitably to a few only, and may even have harmful effects for others not requiring it Or, else, the Qur'ānic reasoning resembles water which can be taken both by a weak child and a robust youth while dialectical argumentation is like a rich food which provides nourishment to the latter but is indigestible and even harmful for children"[1]

Continuing further on the evil effects of dialectics, he writes·

> "The indiscriminate practice of dialectics by its votaries provides an irrefutable argument against that science Since the time it was popularised, it has given rise to many evils which were not to be found during the times of the Prophet's companions."[2]

Al-Ghazali's refusal to return to Baghdad:

Al-Ghazali was prevailed upon by Fakhr ul-Mulk, the son of Nizām ul-Mulk, who had become a Vazier of the Saljuq Prince Sanjar, to return to Nishapur in the month of Zul-qʿadah, 499 A.H.,

1 *Iljām ul-ʿAwām*, p 20
2 *Ibid*

and resume the chief professorship at the Nizāmiah University. Fakhr ul-Mulk was assassinated in the beginning of 500 A.H. by a Batinite emissary and al-Ghazali abandoned the profession of teaching shortly thereafter. He returned to his native town Tūs, and founded a small institution for the teaching of his local disciples and the cultivation of a religious life.

The then Saljuq Sultan appointed Ahmad, the elder son of Nizām ul-Mulk, as his Vazier in 500 A.H., who again made a request to al-Ghazali to resume his post at the Nizāmiah University, Baghdad, which had only been provisionally filled in. As a matter of fact, there was nobody in the entire world of Islam who could replace al-Ghazali. The Nizāmiah University at Baghdad was the premier institution of those days and occupied a pride of place in the educational and religious academies of the ʿAbbāsids. Everyone felt the loss suffered by the Nizāmiah on account of al-Ghazali's retirement and was anxious for his return to teaching in Baghdad. Qwām ud-dīn Nizām ul-Mulk, who was the Grand Vazier of the Saljuq King wrote a personal letter to al-Ghazali expressing the desire of the then ʿAbbāsid Caliph that he should return to Baghdad. In this letter he wrote:

> "I solicited the orders of the Caliph in this matter but these were not granted until Sadr ud-dīn[1] took it upon himself that the wishes of the Caliph shall be communicated by him personally to *Khwaja-i-Ajal, Zain ud-dīn, Hujjat-ul-Islam, Farid uz-zamān*,[2] Abū Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali, who is peerless and up to whom everyone looks for guidance."[3]

In order to impress that all the courtiers and the chiefs of the Caliphate were anxiously awaiting the return of al-Ghazali, all the high officials of the Caliph's court signed the letter. In yet another letter Ahmad wrote to al-Ghazali: "Although scholars

1 Sadar ud-dīn Muhammad, the grandson of a Nizām ul-Mulk, was Vazier of the Saljuq Prince Sanjar, in whose dominion lay Tūs, the native town of al-Ghazali

2 Titles conferred on al-Ghazal

3 *Al-Ghazali*, p 27

would go to the place whereupon you happen to be present for acquiring knowledge from you, it appears reasonable that you should choose for your residence a place which is not only the metropolis of the Islamic world but is also easily accessible from all parts of the empire And such a place is obviously Baghdad."

In reply to the royal edicts and the letters from his well-wishers al-Ghazali sent a lengthy reply giving the reasons for not returning to his teaching profession in Baghdad. He pleaded that one and a half hundred students who were receiving education under him in Tūs, would find it extremely difficult to go all the way to Baghdad with him His family which was not with him earlier in Baghdad would have to face unnecessary hardship if he again migrated from Tūs He also said that in Baghdad it would not be possible for him to remain unconcerned with the polemics and debates which had become the prevailing taste of the court life, while he had taken a vow at the *Muqām-i-Ibrahim* that he would never enter into such futile controversies Other reasons given by al-Ghazali were that he did not like to visit the Caliph nor accept any remuneration from the Caliphate, but it would be difficult for him to do without either of these in Baghdad as he did not possess any landed property in the capital which could support his family The ᶜAbbāsid Caliph as well as the Saljuq King tried their best to persuade al-Ghazali to return to Baghdad but he refused to comply with their requests [1]

Death of al-Ghazali:

Al-Ghazali spent the rest of his life in further studies like a student He had not been able to pay as much attention to the Traditions as he had to the religious and secular sciences He, therefore, tried to make up the leeway by studying the *Sahīh* of *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*[2] under a reputed traditionist of the time, Hafiz ᶜAmr ibn Abi al-Hasan al-Rawāsi. He even obtained the diploma of having studied the two books under al-Rawāsi As the

1 *Al-Ghazali*, p 27

2 The two authentic collections of the Traditions

annalists report, he spent most of his time during this period in the study of the Traditions One of his biographers, Ibn ʿAsakir records

> "During the last days of his life, al-Ghazali addressed himself whole-heartedly to the study of the Traditions During this period he preferred the company of religious scholars, and studied the *Sahih* of *Bukhari* and *Muslim*, which are deemed to be the most authentic collections of the *Sunnah*."[1]

Al-Ghazali wrote another book on legal theory, known as *al-Mustasfa*, just a year or so before his death This work of al-Ghazali is still considered as one of the three outstanding contributions on the subject; the other two being *al-Muʿtamad* of Abul Husain al-Basri and *al-Burhan* of Imam-ul-Haramayn

Al-Ghazali died at Tabran on the 14th of Jamadi al-Ukhra, 505 A H at the age of 55 years Ibn al-Jawazi has given a graphic description of al-Ghazali's death, as told by Ahmad al-Ghazali who was an eye-witness of his brother's remarkable death

> "It was Monday He got up in the morning, made his ablutions and performed the dawn prayers, he then asked to bring his shroud, taking it he kissed and laid it on his eyes with the words, 'I submit to the command of my Master'. then he stretched out his feet, facing the *Qibla* (the direction of Kʿaba) When people saw him he had already passed away."[2]

Two Outstanding Qualities of al-Ghazali:

Immaculate sincerity and indomitable courage are the two most impressive qualities of al-Ghazali which have been acknowledged by all—friends as well as his foes His writings breathe an almost tragic urgency of his message. Ibn Taymiyah differs from al-Ghazali on many issues but he has absolutely no doubt

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1 *Tabʿeen*, p 296

2 *Ithaf us-Saʿada*, Vol I, p 11

about the sincerity of al-Ghazali's purpose[1] The reason behind effectiveness as well as immense popularity gained by al-Ghazali's works was his earnestness and selfless devotion for the Truth which made him abandon the most coveted post at the Nizāmiah University, led him to spend a decade in seclusion and contemplation and, finally, gave him the courage to turn down the invitations of emperors and resist the temptations of riches, honour and glory He has written that the evil which gets out last from the heart of a righteous man is the love of honour. Al-Ghazali's life before his demise bears testimony to the fact that he had attained this stage of self-purification and moral rectitude.

Al-Ghazali was fired with an adventurous spirit and a lofty idealism which enabled him to set his heart upon an ever higher objective His work on jurisprudence and theory of law was a beacon of light for the scholar-jurists for many centuries to come. Contrary to the pattern of education followed in al-Ghazali's time, he studied secular sciences after acquiring mastery over religious learning. He engaged himself in the intensive study of philosophy and other speculative sciences of the times and soon acquired such a proficiency in these subjects that he was able to challenge the competence of reason which could not be adequately met by the philosophers for one hundred years.

In making a personal search for the truth his efforts were in no way meaner than his accomplishments in the field of intellect. He turned to the path of mysticism for purification of self and gaining spiritual strength under a reputed spiritual mentor of the time, Sheikh Abū ʿAli al-Fārmadi (d. 477 A. H.). He abandoned everything he had, spent a decade in solitude and contemplation and was favoured with illumination and beatific visions.

Al-Ghazali's endeavours for the revival and revivification of Islam were not limited to the reformation of the Muslim society alone Shibli Naʿomānī has given an account of the efforts made by him to establish a truly Islamic state in Spain He says:

"Al-Ghazali was not satisfied with the then existing

[1] *Fatāwā*, Vol II, p 194

Muslim states which had degenerated into secular governments He held the view that unless a new State was established in accordance with the Islamic principles of polity, the Muslim society could not be Islamised. He could not, however, spare time for this stupendous task from his pre-occupations of contemplation and penance, purification of self and rectitude of morals. However, after the *Ihyā᾽ ᶜUlūm id-Din* was brought to light and its copies were taken to Spain in 501 A.H , the then king, ᶜAli ibn Yūsuf ibn Tāshfīn, ordered to burn them[1] Al-Ghazali sadly learnt of the incident but shortly thereafter a young man, Muhammad ibn ᶜAbdullah ibn Tūmart by name, arrived from Spain to study under him. Muhammad[2] came of a distinguished family, reputed for its long record of eminent warriors While he was studying under al-Ghazali he had made up his mind, either of his own account, or, most probably, under the influence exerted by

1 *Ithāf us-Saᶜāda*, Vol I, p 10

2 Ibn Subki has given some interesting details about Muhammad in *Tabqāt us-Shafiᶜiyah* He says that Muhammad ibn ᶜAbdullah belonged to Western Africa In his youth he first studied locally and then travelled in the East to study jurisprudence and dialectics Noted for his simplicity, he strictly followed the dictates of the *Shariᶜah* Returning to Egypt after completing his education, he began preaching to the people to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong However, he earned the hostility of the local population owing to his uncompromising attitude and was eventually turned out of the place He then returned to his native land *via* Alexandria He arrived in Mehdiah in 505 A H and commenced to preach reform among the Berber tribes He went to Bajayah and then to Morroco on his errand, where he came into conflict with the members of the royal family ᶜAli ibn Yūsuf Tāshfin summoned him to his court where he was asked to explain the reasons for criticising the King Undaunted by the pomp and glory of the royal court he replied, "Is not wine sold freely in this town? Do not people misappropriate the income of the trusts meant for the orphan?" The king was so impressed by his speech that he burst into tears Muhammad gradually gathered an enormous following round him and before long formed an extensive kingdom with the help of a Berber tribe Masāmdah (*Tabqāt al-Shafiᶜiyah*, Vol IV, pp 71-74)

al-Ghazali, to overthrow ʿAli ibn Yūsuf in order to set up a truly Islamic State in Spain Although al-Ghazali agreed with him, he asked Muhammad about the means as well as the help he hoped to muster in his venture. Having satisfied himself about the project, al-Ghazali allowed Muhammad to proceed with his undertaking In regard to al-Ghazali's blessings for the enterprise of Muhammad, Ibn Khaldūn says 'As people are generally aware, he (Muhammad) met al-Ghazali and consulted him about his venture Al-Ghazali approved of his suggestion since Islam had grown weak in the whole world and there was no king who could unite the entire *Ummah* for upholding the cause of Islam However, al-Ghazali first enquired Muhammad about the means he had for organising the uprising and bringing it to a successful end'.

The kingdom established by Muhammad ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Tūmart, known as *al-Muwahidin*, lasted for a pretty long time The reign of ʿAli ibn Yūsuf Tāshfin, which was notorious for its widespread tyranny, had given encouragement to the laxity of morals among all the classes of society Abduction and rape of women belonging to respectable families by the king's legionaries had become a common feature of the day The royal family, descending from a recently converted Berber tribe called *Mulassamin*, followed a curious custom Their men always wore a veil while their women moved about unrestrained and unveiled Muhammad ibn Tūmart, after achieving power, did not himself ascend the throne but chose a capable and learned young man by the name of ʿAbdul Momin who succeeded the last *Mulassamin* king Tāshfin, son of ʿAli ibn Tāshfin in 540 A H

ʿAbdul Momin and his descendants ruled over the empire of Morocco strictly in accordance with the wishes of Muhammad ibn Tūmart and al-Ghazali Ibn Khaldūn has given an account of the rule by *al-Muwahidin* in these words 'During their rule ʿ*Ulema* were held in high esteem

and all the affairs of the State were decided in consultation with them Justice was made available to the weak and the poor, tyrannical officials were severely punished, ruffians were held in leash, mosques were constructed in royal palaces, the frontier posts were fortified and strengthened and fresh conquests were made' "[1]

Impact of al-Ghazali:

In intellectual and spiritual attainments, brilliance of his mind and the totality of knowledge he had mastered, there have been only a few personalities comparable to al-Ghazali His epoch-making writings were the harbinger of a vigorous intellectual movement and a source of inspiration to the subsequent generations Al-Ghazali did in fact left such a deep imprint on the pages of Islamic history that his impact on the subsequent Islamic thought has always been acknowledged both by his admirers and critics His writings are still held in high esteem and profitably studied by those who yearn for purification of the self and mystic communion with God.

Reformers after al-Ghazali:

Despite al-Ghazali's successful encounter with the scepticism of philosophers which had threatened an spiritual chaos in Islam, the moral and spiritual disintegration of the masses by the end of the fifth century had become so widespread that it required a popular movement for the regeneration of the simplicity and directness of the faith. What the *Millat* needed was an illuminated and inspired mentor who weilded influence among the populace, one who could hold them spell-bound and fill them with faith and enthusiasm, zeal and self-confidence The autocratic governments of the past four hundred years had had definitely a dissolving influence on the spiritual and moral life of the community These had produced a class which, although claiming to profess Islam, had the aggrandisement of the self,

1 *Al-Ghazali*, pp 210-213

acquisition of material success and pursuit of wealth, power and honour as its ultimate end. Iranian and Hellenestic cultural influences had, on the one hand, made inroads into the Muslim society while, on the other, paganism of the pre-Islamic *Jahiliyah*, was again reasserting itself. The ostentatious, conceited and dissolute manners of the elite, grandees and retinues of the emperors had became a model for the commonalty. Unmindful of the humble and poor who led a discontented and frustrated life, those who had the money to squander were busy in their own pursuits of pleasure. The affluent were gradually losing all the good qualities like humanity, generosity and benevolence while the poorer classes were incurring the loss of qualities like patience and contentment, confidence and self-respect Torn between a moral crisis, on the one hand, and social injustice, on the other, the Muslim society was threatened with disintegration What this critical situation demanded was an invigorating call inviting the people back to the faith, cutting asunder the pulls of worldly temptations and benefits, rekindling the desire for salvation and blessedness, achievement of the true knowledge of God and inculcating an ardent desire to submit oneself to His command. It was necessary for it that the true meaning of *Tawhid*, the Unity of God Almighty, along with an awareness of the fleeting nature of the earthly pleasures and the inefficacy of the power and riches were driven home to the people

The fifth century after *Hijrah*, on the other hand, also saw a diffusion of arts and sciences in the world of Islam. We find during this period some of the greatest intellectual leaders brought forth by Islam—Abū Is'haq Shirāzi (d. 476 A H) and al-Ghazali (d 505 A. H.) in the field of religious sciences, Abul Wafā ibn ʿAqeel (d 513 A. H) and ʿAbdul Qāhir al-Jurjāni (d. 471 A. H.) in jurisprudence and literature, Abū Zakarya Tebrezi (d 502 A H) in grammar and lexicography and Abul Qasim al-Hariri (d. 516 A H) in literature Each one of these was a pioneer in his own field and every one of them remained unrivalled for centuries to come. During such a period of intellectual awakening no religious mentor could have hoped to achieve any success unless he was

himself well-versed in all the prevalent sciences It was essential that the person should be as much acclaimed for his literary distinction and brilliance of mind as for his moral and spiritual excellence This was, indeed, necessary if he was not to be brushed aside contemptuously by the learned and elites as an illiterate fanatic Thus, these were the qualities demanded of a man who could fill the hearts of the people with faith and knowledge, cure them of their scepticism, provide solace to the spiritually distressed and fire them with a burning desire for moral and spiritual uplift.

The Two Saints of Baghdad:

God Almighty brought forth two outstanding personages during this period who devoted their life for the religious and spiritual revivification of the Muslims These were ᶜAbdul Qādir Jilani and ᶜAbdur Rahmān ibn al-Jawzi The fields of their activities were different but both of them deeply impressed the life of the Muslims in their times It was also a blessing from God that both of them had Baghdad, the metropolis of the then Islamic world, as their centre, and were endowed with a long life to accomplish the task to which they had addressed themselves.

And, it is also a matter of pride for the Hanbalite school of jurisprudence that both of these luminaries belonged to that very school

CHAPTER VIII

SHEIKH ABDUL QADIR JILANI

ᶜAbdul Qādir was born in Gīlān[1] in 470 A H. He was an Arab by descent, being the tenth descendent of Hasan ibn ᶜAli, but belonged to Iran by migration of his ancestors He came to Baghdad in 488 A H at the age of 18 years It was perhaps not merely fortuitous that he arrived at Baghdad to acquire education almost at the same time when another reputed teacher, al-Ghazali, was leaving the city in search of truth[2] Although inclined to penance and cultivation of religious observances from an early age, he addressed himself whole-heartedly to acquire education under the most reputed teachers of the time such as Abul Wafā Ibn ᶜAqeel, Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Baqillāni and Abū Zakariya Tebrezi. Thereafter, he turned to mysticism and was guided in its tenets and practices by Sheikh Abul Khair Hammād ibn Muslim al-Dabbās[3] and Cadi Abū Saᶜeed Makhrami,[4] and was allowed by the latter to initiate others in the mystic order of his mentor

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1 Gilan or Jilan and also known as Vailam, is a north-western province of Iran, south of the Caspian Sea and north of the Elburz chain It is bounded in the east by Tabristan or Mazandran, and its northern limit is marked by the juncture of the Kur and the Araxes, its political boundary with Russia is marked by Astara stream It is one of the most beautiful areas in Iran (E I S Vol II, p 170)

2 *Ibn Kāthir*, Vol XII, p 149

3 Sheᶜrāni writes that most of the mystics belonging to Baghdad were his disciples He died in 525 A H (*Tabqāt ul-Kubra*, Vol I, p 134)

4 His name was Mubarak ibn ᶜAli ibn Husain As reported by Ibn Kathir, he was a traditionist and mystic belonging to the school of Ahmad ibn Hanbal He died in 511 A H

Popular Enthusiasm :

After completing his education of religious sciences as well as the training in mystic disciplines, ʿAbdul Qādir began his career as a teacher in the seminary of his teacher Cadi Abū Saʿeed Makhrami In his sermons which were delivered in the premises of the same institution, there was soon such a rush of people that extensions had to be carried out in the building of the institution It appeared as if the whole of Baghdad assembled in his congregations At the same time, he claimed such an attention and deference from the people attending his lectures that even the kings would have envied it Sheikh Muwaffaq ud-dīn ibn Qudāmah, author of the *al-Mughni*, records that he had not seen a man more revered for his piety and religious learning than ʿAbdul Qādir The king, his chief and ministers attended his sermons along with the rank and file and used to sit in a corner without any fanfare. Scholars and jurists rubbed shoulders with the students. The enthusiastic devotion of the people coming to his lectures can be well imagined by the fact that often as many as 400 inkpots were counted, which were brought in to take down the notes of his sermons

Moral Excellence :

Notwithstanding the implicit reverence cherished for ʿAbdul Qādir by the people, he was always modest, humble and unpretentious He often left his work to attend to the needs of a child, a destitute or a slave girl Never evading the company of the poor he even washed their clothes or performed similar other personal services for them, yet he never stood up in the honour of any person of the rank or the elite [1] If the Caliph ever paid a visit to him, the chroniclers of his time report, he deliberately went inside his house so that he might not have to stand up to welcome the king [2] He used to come out of the house after the

1 *Tabqāt ul-Kubra*, Vol I, p 127
2 *Ibid*, Vol I, p 128

Caliph had seated himself. ʿAbdul Qādir never paid back the courtesy call to any vazier or the king.[1]

Those who have seen ʿAbdul Qādir have paid a glowing tribute to his moral excellence and large-heartedness, modesty and hospitality, generosity and goodness of his heart. One of his contemporaries who has had the opportunity of enjoying the company of ʿAbdul Qādir says that he had not seen a man more polite, large-hearted and charitable than Sheikh ʿAbdul Qādir. Despite his erudition and eminence, he respected his elders, met the youngsters with a good grace, always saluted first, hailed the poor courteously with deference but never stood up to welcome the grandees or nobles, nor did he ever pay a visit to any minister or governor.[2]

Another contemporary of ʿAbdul Qādir, Hafiz Abū-ʿAbdullah Muhammad ibn Yūsuf al-Barzāli reports:

> "His prayers were readily answered Being extremely tender-hearted, he would burst into tears (if anything sorrowful or touching was mentioned to him). More often he was to be found immersed in meditation and recollection of God. He was soft-hearted, courteous, cheerful, generous and compassionate Being the offspring of a noble family, he was also highly reputed for his profound knowledge and piety."[3]

The testimony of Muhi ud-dīn Abū ʿAbdullah Muhammad ibn Hāmid al-Baghdādi, a jurist-scholar of those times runs as follows

> "Always disposed to avoid things unseemly and indecorous, he only pressed for the desirable and befitting He would boil with indignation if the Divine commandments were overstepped but remained listless to the wrongs and ill-treatments to his own person He would never seek revenge save for the sake of God Almighty, nor, send back

1 *Tabqāt ul-Kubra*, Vol I, p 127.
2 *Ibid*, Vol I, p 127
3 *Qalāʾid al-Jawāhir*, p. 9.

a beggar without giving him something If he had nothing to give he would part with the clothes he had been putting on."[1]

ʿAbdul Qādir took pleasure in feeding the poor and spending freely to meet the needs of the destitutes Ibn al-Najjar reports that ʿAbdul Qādir often used to say "If I were given treasures of the whole world, I would spend it all on feeding the poor." Sometimes he said "It seems that I have a hole in my hands I cannot keep anything with me If I had a thousand *dinars*, I would spend every single shell before the daybreak"[2] He had given instructions to his servants that as many guests as possible should be invited for the dinner. During the dinner he always sat with the poor and lowly, chatted with his students or enquired about the welfare of those who did not happen to be present there His behaviour was so affectionate that everyone who met him gained the impression that ʿAbdul Qādir had the highest regard for him. He overlooked the faults of others and if anyone stated something on oath, he readily accepted his statement He never gave out the secrets of others nor stated anything before others that might put someone to shame.[3]

Reassurance to the Dejected :

The annalists of his time agree that quite a large number of miracles[4] were worked by ʿAbdul Qādir[5] Sheikh-ul-Islam ʿIzz ud-din ibn Abdul-Sālam and Ibn Taymiyah are of the view

1 *Qalā'id al-Jawāhir*, p 9

2 *Ibid*, p 10

3 *Ibid*, p 9

4 Miracle stands both for *Muʿjizah* and *Karamāt* and denotes an act contrary to the usual course of nature However, the former (*Muʿjizah*) is a term used only for the miraculous acts caused by God to confound the adversaries of a prophet and to make them acknowledge the truth of prophethood *Karamāt*, on the other hand, is a wonder wrought by God through a saint or man of God for the good of the people as well as in proof of his sainthood Miracles worked by the saints are, however, of a lower order than those of a prophet

5 *Qalā'id al-Jawāhir*, p 167 and *Jalā' ul-ʿAinā'in*, p 130

that ʿAbdul Qādir was a worker of incessant miracles but his miracle of miracles was filling the heart of the despaired and broken-hearted with faith, hope and enthusiasm. He infused a breath of new life, zeal and self-confidence into countless persons through his powers of speech and the spiritual power of his heart. He was, in truth, a blessing for the world of Islam for he renovated and revived the true content of the faith and tapped the sources of moral and spiritual strength for a religious renaissance[1] Sheikh ʿAmr al-Kaisānī reports that there was hardly a sermon delivered by ʿAbdul Qādir after which a number of Jews and Christians did not embrace Islam, marauders and robbers did not repent for their sins and heretics and apostates did not renounce their mistaken beliefs.[2]

Al-Jubbāʾī relates that ʿAbdul Qādir once told him that he wished to lead the life of a recluse in the wilderness but God had willed that people should derive benefit from him. And, it was a blessing granted unto him that more than five thousand Jews and Christians embraced Islam and about a hundred thousand sinners and criminals repented for their misdeeds on account of him[3]

Teaching and Missionary Activities:

Gifted with divine grace and illumination, ʿAbdul Qādir was ever conscious of the purification of spirit and rectitude of morals, yet he did not lose sight of the importance of teaching and disseminating the correct doctrines of the faith Being a follower of the Hanbalite school of *Sunni* theology, he endeavoured, like his mentor, to root out innovations and deviations from the orthodox faith and practice. Because of his forceful defence of the strict orthodoxy, reports Ibn al-Samʿāni, the traditionist and their followers came to be held in high esteem by the masses

ʿAbdul Qādir used to take daily a class each of the Qurʾānic

1 *Qalāʾid al-Jawāhir*, p 8
2 *Ibid*, p 8
3 *Ibid*, p 8

exegesis, Traditions and Jurisprudence in which he also explained the differences between various juristic schools of Islam The classes were held in the morning and evening, while ʿAbdul Qādir listened to the recitation of the Qur'ān after the mid-day prayers and thereafter dictated *fatwās* on religious or legal questions referred to him. In formulating his answers ʿAbdul Qādir generally followed the Shafeʿite and Hanbalite schools of jurisprudence His juristic-opinions were highly praised by the jurist-scholars of Iraq for these provided a striking example of the acuteness of his intellect [1]

Once the question referred to him was that a man had taken an oath that he would perform a religious observance in a manner that nobody else in the whole world would be able to share the privilege with him but, if he failed to fulfil his undertaking, this would mean an irrevocable separation between him and his wife The scholars were astounded by the strange oath taken by the man and could not suggest an observance which could be performed by him alone in the whole world. ʿAbdul Qādir, however, replied that the man should be allowed to circumambulate Kʿāba alone seven times to perform the lesser *hajj* Everyone agreed that this was the only authorised religious observance which he could perform alone at a time when no body else would be engaged in the same prayer [2]

Certitude of Knowledge:

Profound knowledge of the religious lore and meticulous observance of the Traditions of the Holy Prophet, aided by the grace of God, had unveiled the mysteries of celestial world to ʿAbdul Qādir, who had reached the stage where discrimination between truth and untruth, divine intuition and demoniacal imposition is born in a man He had acquired the certitude of knowledge that the *Shariʿah* of the Last Prophet was perfect and

1 *Tabqāt ul-Kubra*, Vol I, p 126.
2 *Ibid*, p 126.

unchangeable, and that any claim made contrary to the divine edict was simply a satanic suggestion ᶜAbdul Qādir himself relates an incident that he once came across He says

> "Once I saw a dazzling light which filled the entire sky. Then a human frame appeared therein and said, 'O ᶜAbdul Qādir, I am Lord, thy God I have made everything prohibited lawful unto thee' I replied, 'Get away from me, O Devil' As soon as I uttered these words, the lustre in the sky turned into darkness and the human frame began to fizzle out into smoke Then I heard someone saying, "ᶜAbdul Qādir, I had misled seventy mystics with this device, but God saved thee on account of thy knowledge and piety' To this I rejoined, 'No It was simply a grace of God' After ᶜAbdul Qādir had related the incident someone asked, 'How did you know that it was the Satan' 'Since he told me', replied ᶜAbdul Qādir, 'that he had made the things prohibited lawful for me'"[1]

He used to tell his disciples that if any action transgresses the commandments of God, then it is surely an imposition by the Satan In such cases one should return to the tenets of the *Sharīᶜah*, inculcate an unflinching faith, and firmly reject the temptations of self-indulgence, for, whatever is not permitted by the *Sharīᶜah* is decidely misleading[2]

Trust in God :

The unfailing and penetrating vision into the *Tawhīd* or Unity of God had conferred upon ᶜAbdul Qādir that sublime piety which produces an absolute resignation in the will of God He explains the state of resignation in these words

> "When a man finds himself in a trouble, the first endeavours to get rid of it If he fails, he seeks the help of others, such as, kings, officials, grandees or the rich, or,

1 *Tabqāt ul-Kubra*, Vol I, p 127
2 *Ibid*, Vol I, p 127

physicians in the case of an illness When this effort also fails him, he turns to God with invocations and praises, and not unoften with tears and lamentations In other words, he does not look for the assistance of others so long as he can obtain the requisite help from his own self, similarly, he does not implore God if he can get the help from His creatures; and, finally, when he does not get any help from that source too, he surrenders completely to God Almighty It is only at this stage that man seeks the help of God with prayers and invocations, lamentations and tears but God does not accept his entreaties till he gets tired of these too. Then, being completely dejected and broken-hearted, he is permeated by an illumination of spirit which makes him indifferent to the causes and effects Now he has a sublimated soul, unconscious of everything save the Divine Being and aware of the true content of *Tawhīd* (Unity); he has now a certitude of knowledge that save God nothing has any power to do or undo a thing, to Him belongs the power to move a thing or keep it stationery, to promote or debase, to benefit or harm, to give life or bring death, to give honour or indignity, or to make affluent or indigent The man is now like a ball in the hands of a player, or a child in the lap of a nurse, or else a corpse in the hands of those who bathe it; for, these are completely at the mercy of those who possess them Likewise, the man thus loses his identity in the will of his Master, immersed in his higher-self he has no comprehension of anything save the acts of his Lord, nor does he witness or hear or think anything else If he seeks anything, it is the craftsmanship of the Supreme Creator, if he hears, it is His voice, if he comprehends, it is by the knowledge vouchsafed by Him, and if he is enlivened, it is only by His nearness Thus, in the state of total absorption, he gets peace only through the grace and blessings of God, he detests to depend on anything save his Lord, he surrenders himself completely before the will of God, acquires the

knowledge of mystries hidden from the senses through intuition and illumination of heart; and overflows with the gratitude of the Lord for His countless blessings."[1]

Love of Humanity:

The love of humanity, in general, and the affection for the *Ummah*, in particular, was symptomatic of ᶜAbdul Qādir's sublimated soul and indicative of his close affinity to the successors of the Prophet. In one of his sermons he delineated the object and the mental states of different types of persons visiting a market. Coming to the last category, he perhaps describes his own feelings in these words:

"And there is the fifth man whose heart is filled, when he enters a market, with the awe and reverence of the Almighty to seek His blessings for those present in the market He becomes oblivious of everything else save his benediction for the people; he remains immersed, from the time of his entry into the market till he comes out of it, in the solemn invocation of divine blessings and in repenting for the sins of those who happen to be there, and thus he hardly gets any time to see what they are selling or buying. His heart bleeds and eyes shed tears over the ingratitude of man while his tongue remains busy in thanking God over what He has bestowed unto his bondsmen."[2]

The Times of ᶜAbdul Qādir:

ᶜAbdul Qādir spent 73 years of his life, in Baghdad When he came to Baghdad, Caliph Mustazhir b'Illāh Abul ᶜAbbās (487-512 A. H) was the reigning monarch after whom four other ᶜAbbāsid Caliphs, al-Mustarshid b'Illāh (512-529 A. H), al-Rāshid b'Illāh (deposed 529 A H), al-Muqtafi l' Amr Illāh (530-555 A H) and al-Mustanjid b'Illāh (555-565 A H) succeeded to the throne one after another.

1 *Futūh ul-Ghaib*, (Lecture No 3), pp 11-13
2 *Ibid*, (Lecture No 72), p 175

This was one of the most troublous times of the ʿAbbāsid rule when the Caliphs and Saljukid Kings vied with each other for maintaining their supremacy. The former being shorn of their temporal power were prevailed upon, sometimes with their permission but not unoften through coercion, by the Saljukid Kings to accept their domination. This also sometimes engulfed the Islamic world into fratricidal conflicts in which the Muslims shed the blood of one another

Several such incidents took place during the reign of Caliph al-Mustarshid He was a brave and wise administrator who won numerous battles but he was finally defeated by the Saljukid King Masʿūd in 529 A H Ibn Kathīr, giving an account of the Caliph's defeat writes

> "The Sultan (Masʿūd) gained victory and the Caliph (al-Mustarshid) was taken prisoner Baghdad was ransaked which plunged the city into sorrow The people dismantled the pulpits of the mosques, gave up attending congregational prayers and women came out lamenting for the Caliph and other captives The people in other parts of the country followed suit with the result that Malik Sanjar had to ask his nephew to reinstate the Caliph Masʿūd acted on the advice of his uncle but the Caliph was assassinated by the emissaries of the Batinites while he was on his way back to Baghdad "[1]

These heart-rending incidents were witnessed by ʿAbdul Qādir He saw the Muslims engaged in internal strife and bloodshed The ghastliness of these feuds and forays, the cruelty, savagery and treachery of those who engaged in them, and the miseries they inflicted upon their foes for the transitory pleasures of power, position and riches made him extremely sad It is true that he had nothing to do with these struggles for power, he was, nevertheless, alive to the miseries inflicted on the people and evil effects of the unsettled conditions during his times Through his sermons, therefore, he endeavoured, with the seriousness of purpose

1 Ibn Kathīr, Vol. XII, pp 207-208

and ardent zeal characteristic of him, to give a call for moral propriety and rectitude of the self he vividly explained the transitory nature of the world and its fleeting pleasures, the need for coveting the eternal bliss and preparing for the life-to-come, and the importance of evoking faith and correct mental attitude consisting of right conduct in speech, livelihood and ethical behaviour.

Sermons of ᶜAbdul Qādir:

The discourses of ᶜAbdul Qādir had a magnetic effect which is still discernible in them ᶜAbdul Qādir is at his best in *Futūh ul-Ghaib* and *al-Fatah al-Rabbānī* In describing the love and unity of the Divine Being he appears to be inspired by higher sources The reader can still find the spirit of sincerity and enthusiasm running through these sermons

Following in the footsteps of the Prophet, his successors and the illuminated saints of the old, ᶜAbdul Qādir touched on the current problems of his days, analysed the reasons for the miseries and maladies of the people and provided answers to their doubts and deficiencies Along with this, the tremendous sincerity and earnest zeal for the welfare of the people fired his haranguing with a frenzy of enthusiasm and magnetic effect capable of pulling the strings of the heart

Unity of the Divine Being:

The forces of worldliness had become so strong during ᶜAbdul Qādir's time that the entire social and economic life of the community appeared to be woven into the context of political situation then obtaining, people had developed a tendency of depending upon the kings and nobles for realisation of their worldly ends and had begun to treat them as ultimate dispensers of benefits and harms In order to counteract this mistaken tendency of the people, he says in one of his sermons

> "This entire creation is like a man who has been imprisoned and chained by a king whose dominions are vast and countenance awesome The prisoner has been

hanged from a pine tree beneath which overflows a river, wide and deep The king is seated on an elevated chair, having arrows and bows, javelins and spears by his side He hits the captive with whatever weapon he desires Now, would it be prudent for anyone witnessing the scene to divert his attention from the king and expect harm or favour from the captive instead of the king? Would not such a man be deemed a fool or even mad? Oh God, I seek thy refuge from blindness after having being given eyes, from being cast off after getting near Thee, from regression after being promoted to Thy favour, from being misled after obtaining Thy guidance and from apostasy after having been granted faith "[1]

In another sermon he asks to instil the love of God to the exclusion of everything else besides Him.

"Keep your eyes fixed on Him who is looking at you, keep yourself before One who keeps Himself before you, love Him who loves you; hark unto Him who calls you, seek help from Him who can save you, take you out of the darkness of ignorance, cleanse you of the impurity of your soul, and redeem you from the baser-self and misleading temptations, despair and timidity. Your earthly desires are like your foolish friends who keep you off the righteous path and deprive you of the things, pleasing and desirable How long would you remain slaves of your desires, temptations, greed, pride, in short, this transitory world? How long would you remain forgetful of the Hereafter and of your Creator, the Fashioner of everything, the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden; everything is touched within His grasp from which emanates the love within your heart, the peace and solace, blessings and favours"[2]

Again, he throws light on the same topic in another lecture

"The entire creation is helpless Nothing can do good

1 *Futūh ul-Ghaib*, (Lecture No 17), p 49

2 *Ibid*, (Lecture No 62) p 157

or harm to you. It is only God who lets a thing be done by you, or, in other words, the will of God finds expression through you or somebody else. God has already destined whatever is to happen to you; whether it be beneficial or harmful, and, the destiny cannot be changed Those who are faithful and virtuous set an example unto other creations There are a few among these who have so purified their heart that their interior and exterior selves have become one, even if they have riches, their desires never seethe with the worldly attachments Verily, only those are courageous, valiant and powerful who have purified their hearts and attained this stage of illumination Unto these alone belongs the kingdom of Heaven and Earth for they have cleansed their heart of everything save God; they are like a soldier who guards the door of his heart, with the sabre of *Tawhid* (Unity) and the *Shari*ᶜ*ah* in his hand, to bar the entry of all creations to a place reserved for the Creator. Since they have attuned their hearts to the ultimate source of power, the *Shari*ᶜ*ah* beautifies their exterior while *Tawhid* and the wisdom of God's knowledge decorate their interior."[1]

Explaining what is meant by the false objects of worship, he says

"You put your trust in your own self, in others, in your wealth, in your rites and customs, in your trade and business, or in your rulers; but, in whatever object you place your reliance, it becomes, to say the truth, your object of worship. If you fear someone, or expect harm or favour from him or else deem him as an intercessor with God, then he is the object of worship for you"[2]

On another occasion, ᶜAbdul Qādir vividly described the jealousy and pride of God and His abhorrence of all associates, as

1 *Fatah al-Rabbāni*, (Lecture No 13), p 89

2 *Ibid* (Lecture No 20), p. 137

also the wisdom lying behind the loss of the things adored and loved by man

"You often complain, as you would ever do, that you have to suffer the loss of whatever you set your affections on The object of your fancy, if it is a human being, either separates or dies If it is wealth that you care for, you incur losses or are deprived of it Then, should I tell you, that God is in love with you, and He is jealous too! He has created you for Himself but you want to be enraptured by others! Have you not heard what God has said. *He holds them dear who love Him*, and also, *I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me*[1] And, are you not aware of what the Prophet once said *When God loves anyone, He places him in trouble but if he puts up with it with endurance and forbearance, God then sets him apart for Himself* Requested to elucidate what he meant by 'setting apart of a man', the Prophet replied *God deprives him of his possessions and progeny* This is so because it is natural for a man to love his offsprings and possessions and thus his love which should have been for God alone is divided between the Creator and the created, between the Eternal and the finite

"God is, however, extremely Proud and Mighty and therefore He destroys whatever threatens to become an associate in the love for Him It is only then that the heart of the man whom He loves gets attuned to Him And, then, this man can claim to enjoy the distinction of what has been described thus by God *He holds them dear who love Him* It is the stage when the heart of the man is cleansed of all idols and associates (of God) such as the offsprings, riches, pleasures and desires It has now no yearnings, no longings left—worldly or otherwise, not even those relating to piety and miraculous powers, stations and states, nearness and remoteness, the heart becomes a bottomless vessel in

1 *Adh-Dhariyat*, 56

which nothing can be kept God Almighty being extremely Proud and Jealous makes the heart of His beloved incapable of nourishing any other desire, He shrouds the heart of His devotee with His awe and a gasp of admiration, and guards it with His Glory and Might so that nothing can get inside this heart, nor can the possessions and riches, family and progeny, friends and relations, piety and miraculous powers do any harm to it None of these finds a place in the heart of such a man nor, then, God remains, jealous of them Whatever is granted thereafter to this man is a gift or reward from his God so that he may be of help to those who are around him or visit him "[1]

Refuge of the Broken-hearted :

The Muslim society in the time of ʿAbdul Qādir could broadly be divided into two classes The first of these comprised the men of substance who were deficient in faith and virtuous behaviour As against this, there was another class, poverty-stricken and down-trodden, but endowed with faith and a spirit of righteousness, moral strength and uprightness Thes people, sometimes, feeling disconcerted and broken-hearted, viewed the affluent with jealousy and mistrust, and regarded themselves as deprived and discarded ʿAbdul Qādir holds out hope and cheer to these people in one of his sermons He says

"O! empty-handed beggarly fellows, the world would appear to be at logger-heads with you, you are barefooted, unclothed and unfed, broken-hearted and ill-starred, evicted from every place and deprived of your longings and fancies But do not say that God has reduced you to poverty, turned the world against you, abandoned, maligned or persecuted you, did not assign the portion of earthly pleasures due to you, or did not bestow honour and fame upon you Nor is it proper for you to complain that God has granted his

1 *Futūh al-Ghaib*, (Lecture No 32) pp 84-86

favours to others, made them reputed and honoured, although they belong to the same faith as you do and are the progeny of Adam and Eve like you

"It is really so because you are like a fertile land on which God is sending down the rains consisting of endurance and resignation, conviction and faith, knowledge and grace The tree of your faith is taking roots, sprouting forth its branches, its shade closing over you, pushing out new shoots and fruits, getting higher and bigger without your providing any fertilizer to it God Almighty knows what you really need He has, therefore, assigned a befitting place for you in the Hereafter He has made you a lord in the life-to-come where His bounties are countless, inconceivable and unheard of As God has said, nobody knows what delights have been stored for your eyes in the Paradise This shall be your recompense for the faithful performance of what has been enjoined unto you, and your endurance, resignation and submission to the will of God

"As for those who have been well-afforded in this world, they have been placed in easy circumstances for they are like a barren land, rocky and sandy, which neither stores nor absorbs the rains, and it is difficult to implant the tree of faith in it It has, therefore, to be provided with fertilizers so that the weak saplings of their faith may get nourishment and push out the shoots of righteous action Thus, if the wealth, honour and fame are taken away from them, the tree of their faith shall waste away and its leaves and fruits shall wither although God intends to make it strong Therefore, my poor brethren, you ought to know that the faith of the wealthy does not have deeper roots, it lacks that strength which has been endowed to you, and it needs the riches and earthly prizes for its nourishment If these gifts were to be taken away from them, their faith will give place to blasphemy and they shall join the ranks of infidels, apostates and hypocrites, unless, of course, God

bestows on them spiritual light and illumination, endurance and resignation to strengthen their faith."[1]

Worldly Pleasures :

ʿAbdul Qādir did not preach asceticism nor did he exhort to give up the worldly possessions. What he emphasised upon in his sermons was that these should be made use of by a man to the extent he needs them but he should never allow himself to become a slave of his desires and temptations, nor should he hold the earthly gifts dear to his heart. Explaining the purport of the Tradition which runs: *Verily, the world has been created for you, and you have been created for the Hereafter*, he says:

> "Do not try to obtain your share of the worldly gifts in a way that you have to keep standing before it like a beggar. You ought to be like a sovereign who keeps himself seated while the gifts are presented before him This world acclaims those who stand and wait at the door of God Almighty but it demeans those who wait upon it. Therefore, get your share of the worldly benefits without demeaning yourself or compromising your dignity, and this is what Allah expects of you "[2]

In another sermon he says·

> "It is perfectly lawful to lay hands on the world and its gifts, to possess it or even to accumulate it for a commendable purpose, but it is forbidden to set your heart upon it You may allow it to stand at the door of your heart but it is prohibited to allow it to get inside the door, for it shall not bring any honour to you "[3]

Critique of the Kings :

ʿAbdul Qādir did not sermonise and admonish the populace alone; he fearlessly performed the duty made incumbent by the *Sharīʿah* i e. of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong, and,

1 *Futūh al-Ghaib*, (Lecture No 25), pp 65-67
2 *Falah al-Rabbāni*, (Lecture No 21), p 145
3 *Ibid*, (Lecture No 51), p 163

whenever he considered it necessary, he publicly denounced the actions and policies of the kings, nobles, and officials He bitterly criticized the faults of the great ones without the slightest consideration of their power or position Hafiz ʿImad ud-dīn ibn Kathīr, a historian of his time, has made a mention of it in these words

> "He admonished all—the caliphs, vaziers, kings, jurists, elite and the laity—to adopt the righteous course and to forsake the things forbidden He openly criticized, unsparingly, everyone to his face in his discourses
>
> "He used to denounce the authorities sternly if any tyrant was appointed to a public office by them He never cared for anyone if he saw the commands of God being overstepped "[1]

Ibn Kathīr writes that when Caliph al-Muqtafi l'Amr Illāh appointed Abul Wafāʾ Yahya, a man notorious for his cruelty, as a Cadi, ʿAbdul Qādir admonished the Caliph in these words:

> "You have appointed a man notorious as the 'Most Tyrant' to rule over the Muslims What would your answer be tomorrow on the Day of Judgment, before the Lord of the Worlds, the Most Merciful?"[2]

Ibn Kathīr further says that when the Caliph came to know of the admonition of ʿAbdul Qādir he burst into tears and immediately dismissed Abul Wafāʾ Yahya from the office

ʿAbdul Qādir also vigorously condemned this-worldliness of those scholars, jurists and saints who were prepared to accept an office or to act as entourages of the rulers He held this class responsible for the waywardness of the kings and ruling chiefs In one of his addresses he rebuked these elements thus

> "Ah, you are the fellows who have misused your knowledge and wisdom What have you to do with your predecessors? You are enemies of God and His Apostle, you are no less than the robbers, tyrants and hypocrites!

1 Ibn Kathīr Vol XII, p 252 and *Qalāʾid al-Jawāhir*, p 8

2 *Qalāʾid al-Jawāhir*, p 8

How long will you persist in your pious fraud? How long will you continue to don this shroud of assumed piety for the sake of your kings and rulers? How long will you remain a slave of power and position, passions and desires? Verily, you and most of your kings are tyrants and traitors unto God and His bondsmen O' God, our Lord, either degrade these transgressors and humiliate them or make them repent for their sins; either mortify the tyrants and efface them from Thy earth or let them mend their ways"[1]

On another occasion he addressed a religious scholar in these words

"Are you not ashamed that your avarice has forced you to serve these tyrants and crave for the emoluments declared unlawful and prohibited by the *Shari^cah*? How long shall you hold on to your mean pursuits? The kingdom of the rulers to whom you are playing a second fiddle shall shortly be no more and then you shall be presented before God Almighty who is Eternal, Omnipotent"[2]

Concern for Moral Rectitude:

Extremely solicitous of eradicating the moral laxity and viciousness produced by ever increasing opulence, luxury and indolence in the metropolis of Islam, ᶜAbdul Qādir sometimes came out with the most severe criticism of the then society giving expression to his heartfelt misery over the sinful ways of the people This was the impassioned appeal made by ᶜAbdul Qādir in one of his sermons

"The edifice of Faith built by the Apostle of God is being demolished, brick by brick, and now it is about to fall to pieces Come, O' mankind, to rebuild what has been dismantled and renovate what has been laid waste. Until this task is completed, we have to work jointly as a team

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1 *Fatah al-Rabbānī*, (Lecture No 51), p 363

2 *Ibid*, (Lecture No 52) p 371

Come to my aid, O' Sun, O' Moon and O' Stars "[1]

Again, in another sermon he says

"Islam is shedding tears Its wail of woe is on account of the blasphemous hypocrites and innovators who are practising a pious fraud by attributing things that do not belong to Islam

"Look at your predecessors They lived like you but enjoined the right and prohibited the wrong But you have forgotten them altogether so soon after their death !

"Do you not know that even dog is faithful to his master ? He guards his fields and the cattle, is pleased to see his master although he does not get more than a few crumbs in the evening You are favoured with the bounties of God but, quite the other way, you are neither thankful to Him nor you dutifully perform the task assigned to you Instead, what you do is to break His commands and transgress the limits of the *Sharīʿah* "[2]

Reform and Renovation :

The impressive sermons of ʿAbdul Qādir were a source of inspiration to innumerable persons in Baghdad These enabled thousands to offer earnest repentance for their sins but in order to build up a movement aiming at a widespread and permanent reform of the social, moral and spiritual life of the people, it was necessary to find out a way whereby more durable relations could be fostered between the mentor and the disciples and, at the same time, arrangements could also be made for the religious education and training of the latter As it were, the discourses did not provide a permanent link between the speaker and the audience People came to these meetings, listened to the sermons and left to come back again or not, at their sweet will Many of them persisted in the way they had been treading along without paying any heed to the call of the reformer to purify their souls and to rectify their moral behaviour

1 *Fatah al-Rabbānī*, p 649

2 *Ibid*., p 661

Religious seminaries and educational institutions too did not provide an answer to the problem because of the vast population of Muslims and the mundance pre-occupations of the people. The problem of making arrangements for a continued and concerted effort for the education and training of the people in religious tenets and practices, and infusing a breath of new life in the vast numbers spread over far off lands defied a solution in the absence of a truly Islamic State The foremost business or rather the end of the Caliphate was, in the words of Caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz, to guide the people in moral rectitude rather than to collect revenues for the conduct of administration The then Muslim States were, however, not only indifferent to this fundamental objective but were also extremely allergic to any movement or criticism on this score which could pose a threat to their political supremacy Thus, these governments being suspicious of all efforts made for the resurgence of Islamic spirit, and, erroneously taking these as movements designed to build up political leadership, lost no time in crushing them

In these circumstances there was no way left to revivify the religious spirit and fill the people with an enthusiasm, zeal and self-confidence for reintroduction of the precepts of religion in their daily life The only alternative left was to call upon the people to take an oath of allegiance for the purpose Following in the footsteps of the Apostle of God, it had become necessary that a guide of spiritual and moral excellence should obtain an oath, or the *baʿit*, as it is called, from the people willing to offer sincere penitence and undertaking to lead a virtuous life in future in accordance with the directions of their mentor. If placing oneself under the instruction of an inspired guide meant that he was fairly started upon in his journey to the end of purification of spirit and moral rectitude, the oath of allegiance enjoined a much more onerous responsibility on the mentor himself The guide or the spiritual teacher had to lead the wandering soul of the disciple taking the *baʿit*, stage by stage, from cleansing of his spiritual impurities, renouncing the love of worldly temptations and desire wealth and honour, infusing an spirit of moral uprightness

correct ethical behaviour, following the teachings contained in the Qur'ān and the Traditions, to the illumination of the pupil's soul This was, in truth, what the *ba'ıt* meant and by which the inspired souls tried to infuse into their disciples, through preaching and personal example, loving care and unalloyed sincerity, an inner vitality of spirit and strength of moral integrity As the experience shows, the reformers and renovators of faith did succeed in revivifying the true faith and tapping new sources of popular strength in their own times, through this tried and infallible method which just copied the procedure and technique followed by the Prophet of Islam. Innumerable persons have been provided with an opportunity of not only adopting a virtuous life through this method but have also been led to attain even the stage of "Divine Acquaintance" and "Love" by the inspired guides and teachers, of whom the mentor *par excellence* was Sheikh Muhi ud-dīn 'Abdul Qādir Jilani. The history of peoples subscribing to the faith of Islam will bear a witness that no guide with an illuminated soul had been more successful than 'Abdul Qādir in bringing about a revival and resurgence of the true Islamic spirit At the same time, the method followed by him is still the easiest and most effective way of filling the people with faith and enthusiasm aiming at the reformation of their lives in accordance with the tenets of Islam

A few divines and mystics had employed the method of *ba'ıt*, as the annalists report, before 'Abdul Qādir but none had achieved the success as he did With his profound knowledge, intellectual gifts, charming and loving personality and spiritual excellence he renovated the system of *ba'ıt* and founded a new mystic order known as the *Qādiriyah* 'Abdul Qādir elaborated and systematised the mystic practices, made these more wide-based and developed to make them more harmonious with the tenets of the *Shari'ah* Countless people were guided through this path of self-discipline, devotion to God and virtuous living during the life time of 'Abdul Qādir, and after him, his disciples propagated the *Qādiriyah* order in almost every Islamic country. The branches of the order were founded in Yaman, Hadhramaut, India, Indonesia

and in the countries of Africa where it helped innumerable people to come back to the path of loyalty and obedience to God and His Apostle.[1] ʿAbdul Qādir and his disciples were also successful in converting a considerable number of non-Muslims to Islam.

Influence of ʿAbdul Qādir:

The moral and spiritual excellence of ʿAbdul Qādir, his unflinching devotion to God, the efficacy of his sermons, the inspiring and regenerating influence exercised by him over the people in his own time and the upright character and moral rectitude of those who have had an opportunity to be instructed by him, mark him as one of the most eminent men of God born in Islam. He was not only a worker of incessant miracles, as the chroniclers of his time report, but his miracle of miracles lay in his inspiring and impressive teachings which made thousands to turn away from the lust of power and wealth and to inculcate the

1 Among the disciples of ʿAbdul Qādir who devoted their life to the cause of preaching and inviting people through their precepts and example to spiritual and moral purification, the most notable was Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn Suharwardi (593—632 A. H.), the spiritual successor and nephew of Sheikh Abū Najib Suharwardi. He was the founder of another *Sufi* order known as *Suharwardiya*. He also wrote a very popular work entitled '*Awarif ul-Maʿārif*' on mysticism. Ibn Khallikān writes that during his old age he was the greatest mystic of Baghdad and there was none so pious and popular as he. (Ibn Khalikān, Vol. III, p. 119). Another writer, Ibn al-Najjār has left records about his immense popularity and preachings (*Mirʾat ul-Jinān*, Vol. IV, p. 81). Ibn Khallikān writes that mystics from far off places visited him for guidance and spiritual light. Ibn Khallikān adds that his sermons were very efficacious. (Ibn Khallikān. Vol. III, pp. 119-120). ʿ*Awarif al-Maʿārif*, written by Shahab ud-din Suharwardi, has a pride of place among the mystic works. One of its distinguishing features is that unlike the mystic writings of the earlier *sufis*, it upholds the tenets of the orthodox school and cleanses the *Shariʿah* of all innovations. (*Tiqṣār-e-Juyūd*, p. 63)

Shahab ud-din Suharwardi too was fortunate in having some very notable personages among his disciples. One of these, Bahāʾ ud-din Zakariya Multani was a well known and eminent saint of his time in India

true spirit of faith through self-correction and purification of the soul In short, his was an striking example of the innate power of Islam to produce a true spirit of religion, love of God and moral righteousness in an age of crass materialism

Death of ʿAbdul Qādir :

ʿAbdul Qādir died at the age of 90, in 561 A H An account of the death of ʿAbdul Qādir has been preserved by his son, Sharaf ud-dīn ʿIsā Thus he writes·

> "During his last illness, ʿAbdul Wahāb (brother of Sharaf ud-dīn) requested Sheikh ʿAbdul Qādir to give him some advice which he could follow after his death The Sheikh replied 'Inculcate a deep consciousness of the sublimity and grandeur of God Fear not anyone nor cherish a desire for benefit from anybody save God Entrust all of your needs to Him and then have confidence in Him Whatever you need, place it before God with a conviction in the prospect of its fulfilment Keep yourself constantly occupied with *Tawhid*, the Unity of God, on which there is a consensus, for, when the heart is filled with awe, love and respect for Him, nothing can escape it or get out of it' Thereafter he asked his sons to clear out saying 'You find me here with yourself but I am really with others Make room for the angels who are here besides me You ought to be courteous and pay homage to them I find the blessings from God descending here for which you should leave ample space' He saluted from time to time some invisible beings for a day and a night He would say 'May the peace and blessings of God be upon you. May God pardon you and me and accept our repentance Come, in the name of God Almighty, and do not go back'"

Once he said:

> "Woe be unto you I care not a whit for anything, neither for the Angel of Death or any other angel My God has bestowed blessings on me far in excess of you.
>
> "In the night the Sheikh died he gave a loud cry He

lifted and stretched his hand several times Thereafter, he addressed his sons, ʿAbdur Razzāq and Mūsa, saying: 'May God have peace and blessings on you. Pay attention to God and grasp His attributes' Then he said: 'I am just coming to you Be more kind to me' He remained unconscious for a while after that On regaining consciousness he exclaimed 'There is as much difference between you and me as between the heavens and the earth Don't think of me like anybody else' When ʿAbdul ʿAzīz, one of his sons, asked about his illness, he replied 'Don't ask me anything. I am immersed in the gnosis of God Almighty' In reply to another question asked by ʿAbdul Azīz his reply was 'No body knows my illness, nor can anyone diagnose it, neither the jinn, nor men, nor angels The command of God never supersedes His knowledge, the order changes but not His knowledge, God may override His command by another one, but never what is contained in His knowledge He obliterates or preserves whatever He desires; He is the final Authority above whom there is none, unlike a human being who has to render an account for his actions, God is Omnipotent Now I know the secrets of His attributes, they are what they are'

"One of his sons, ʿAbdul Jabbār asked him if he had any pain The Sheikh replied to him 'I have pain in my entire body except my heart which is attuned to God' Then in his last moments he said 'I seek the help of God Almighty save whom there is no other God, Glorified is He, the Most High, He is Ever-living for death seizeth Him not, Praise be unto Him for He is the Exalted, the Mighty, He exercises His power through the death of his creations I bear witness that there is no God save Allah and that Muhammad is the Apostle of God' His son Mūsa relates that he tried to say '*Taʿazzaza*' i e 'Exalted and Dominant is He' but he was not able to pronounce it correctly He tried again and again till he pronounced the word correctly. Thereafter, he said thrice, 'Allah, Allah, Allah,'-

his voice failed thereafter, the tongue having been fixed up in the palate, his soul departed from the body"[1]

ʿAbdul Qādir left quite a large number of pious and saintly disciples who continued to disseminate his message and fight this-worldliness and its vices like opulence and luxury, fame and power.

1 *Futūh ul-Ghaib*, pp 189-192

CHAPTER IX

IBN AL-JAWZI

Ibn al-Jawzi presents another striking example of a preacher, reformer and renovator of the faith. He was the most reputed and profound scholar of his time and a prolific writer of voluminous books on exegesis of the Qur'ān, Traditions, history and literary criticism

Early Life:

Born in 508 A. H. at Baghdad, Ibn al-Jawzi was 38 years younger than 'Abdul Qādir. His father died when he was still young but his mother sent him to study under a reputed traditionist of the day, Ibn Nāsir. He committed the Qur'ān to memory and learnt its recitation, studied the Traditions and calligraphy. Describing his childhood days to his son, Ibn al-Jawzi says:

> "I quite recollect that I was admitted to the primary school at the age of six Boys much more elder than me were my class-mates I do not recollect if I had ever spent my time in playing or laughing with other boys. Instead of witnessing the performance of the jugglers who frequently held their shows in the field in front of the mosque where I studied, I used to attend the lectures on Traditions. Whatever Traditions or biographical accounts of the Prophet were related in the lectures, those were memorised by me and then I also used to take them down on reaching home. Other boys spent their time in playing along the banks of the river but I invariably used to sit down with a book in my hand in a corner and read it from cover to cover.
>
> "I was always so anxious to attend the classes in time that often I doubled up to reach the school before the

> lectures began It was not unoften that I had nothing to eat for the whole day but I am thankful to God that I have never had an occasion to be grateful to anybody in that connexion "[1]

Zeal for the Traditions:

Ibn al-Jawzi had an intense enthusiasm for acquiring knowledge and propagating the Traditions of the Apostle of God His works on the subject were so numerous that, as the chroniclers of his time report, Ibn al-Jawzi had made a will that the water for the ritual washing of his dead body should be heated by burning the clippings and ends of his pens used for writing the Traditions It is further related that these clippings were found more than sufficient for the purpose [2]

Ibn al-Jawzi was a voracious reader from an early age In his time Baghdad had well-stocked libraries where he used to spend most of his time. He read whatever book he could lay his hands on In one of his books entitled *Said al-Khatir*, an autobiographical memoir, he writes.

> "I may state here my own cast of mind I am never tired of reading books and my joy knows no bounds whenever I find a new book . . . . . . It would appear to be an exaggeration if I say that I had gone through 20,000 books during my student days I came to know of the courage and large-heartedness, erudition and tenacious memory, piety and eagerness for prayer cherished by the savants of the old, which I could not have learnt without reading those books The study of the books in those days also revealed to me the shallow knowledge of the scholars in our times and the dull spirits of the students now-a-days [3]

Penmanship of Ibn al-Jawzi:

Ibn al-Jawzi turned to writing from an early age He began

1 *Nazhat ul-Walad*, pp 81-82
2. Ibn Khallikān, Vol III, p. 321
3 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol III, pp 607-608.

writing four folios daily and continued the practice throughout his life. Ibn Taymiyah relates that when he took a stock of Ibn al-Jawzi's books, they were found to be more than one thousand in number. Ibn al-Jawzi had such a profound knowledge of the science of Traditions that he claimed to tell the authenticity or otherwise of any Tradition with reference to the character of those through whom the Tradition had been handed down or with reference to the manner in which it had been narrated He was also without a peer as a litterateur and as an orator

His Piety:

Ibn al-Jawzi was as much celebrated for his moral uprightness, devotion and piety as for his literary attainments His grandson, Abul Muzaffar, relates that Ibn al-Jawzi completed recitation of the Qur'ān every week, he never spent his time in fun or frolics during his childhood and never ate anything unless he was sure that it had been obtained through lawful means Ibn al-Najjār records that in religious devotion and observance of prayers he presented a sublime picture of saintliness Another annalist, Ibn al-Fārsi says that Ibn al-Jawzi kept vigils by night and was never forgetful of the recollection of God The works of Ibn al-Jawzi present an striking example of his fervent devotion and the heartfelt love of God. In an autobiographical passage included in the *Said al-Khatir* he writes

> "From early childhood I had an inclination towards devotion to religious contemplation and worship I zealously observed obligatory as well as supererogatory prayers and preferred seclusion Spending my days thus, I felt peace and enlightenment. I extremely regretted the time spent otherwise for I had an ardent desire to utilize every moment of my life under a diligent consciousness of the Omnipresent Lord. In those days I felt my heart attuned to God while my supplications and benedictions were a source of indescribable pleasure to me My lectures and discourses, quite effective in those days, it appears, attracted a few high officials and chiefs who wanted to come closer

to me by paying homage and putting themselves at my service As it were, I too felt inclined towards them but in their company I lost the sense of peace and sanctifying grace that I enjoyed earlier in my supplications. Thereafter other functionaries of the government started gaining my favour with the result that the precautions I used to take earlier in regard to avoiding everything unlawful and doubtful, gave place to a sense of complacency It was still not so deplorable but gradually my specious reasoning made the doubtful objects appear as perfectly lawful and, then, I realised that I had lost the sublimity and purity of my heart, instead, it seemed, as if a profaneness had taken its place which gave rise to restlessness and disquietitude in me. I witnessed that my sermons too bore a mark of my anxiety which caused an ever larger number of persons to offer penitence for their sins while my own guilt weighed heavily on my consciousness. This, obviously, made me still more disturbed, but there seemed to be no way out. I visited the tombs of the saints and earnestly beseeched God to show me the right path. Ultimately, God helped me and I again felt an inclination to spend more of my time in prayer and solitude Now I came to know what was wrong with me and I thanked my Lord, the Most Compassionate and Merciful, for His kindness "[1]

Character of Ibn al-Jawzi :

He is reported to have been a well-built man with handsome features and an imposing countenance Favoured with easy circumstances "he possessed a refined taste", says Muwaffaq ʿAbdul Latif, "in dress and dietary habits and was charming and graceful". Another annalist, Ibn al-Daymi relates that Ibn al-Jawzi was soft-spoken, handsome and of medium height, reputed for his clemency and generosity Extremely careful of his health, he liked what may be called the "good things of temperate quality."

1. *Said al-Khatir*, Vol. I, pp. 121-122

In the *Said al-Khatir* and the *Talbis-o-Iblis* he has mentioned his numerous clinical experiences and advised against penance and arduous religious practices which had then been introduced by the Iranian mystics

Encyclopædic Knowledge:

The most outstanding feature of Ibn al-Jawzi's character is his versatility. He towered over his contemporaries in his ardent desire to be well versed in almost every branch of learning. He has himself described it in some detail in the *Said al-Khatir.*

> "The greatest trial for man lies in the loftiness of his ambition · the higher is one's ambition, the loftier aspiration for advancement or success one has However, he is sometimes unable to achieve it owing to unfavourable circumstances, or because he lacks the means, and this causes dissatisfaction God has, however, made me so ambitious that I have always a hankering for something higher But I have never wished that God might not have made me too ambitious It is true that life can be fully enjoyed only by a care-free, imprudent and a listless fellow but nobody endowed with brains would ever like retrogression of his intellect simply for the sake of getting more fun out of worldly pleasures. I know of many people who are boastful of their lofty ambitions but I have found their aspirations really limited to only one field of their activity in which they are ardently desirous of achieving success These people are completely indifferent to their deficiency in other fields A poet by the name of Sharif Radhi once said in a couplet 'Ill health is never without a cause, but in my case it is because of too high an aspiration.' However, on going through his biographical accounts I found that he had no ambition save achieving power and position.
>
> "It is related that Abū Muslim Khurāsāni could not sleep well during his youthful days. When asked about the reason for it, he replied, 'How can I sleep? Brilliant and

ambitious though I am, I have been condemned to lead a life of poverty and obscurity'

'Then, what would satisfy you ?' asked someone He replied, 'I would be satisfied only if I achieve greatness and power'

'Then try for it,' he was told

'This would not be possible without putting my life at stake', replied he

He was asked again, 'But why dont' you do so ?'

He said, 'Intellect asks me not to run into danger'

'What would you do then ?' was demanded of him

'I would not accept the advice of my intellect,' replied Abū Muslim, 'and would give myself up to my folly I will play a desperate game at the bidding of my ambition and seek the help of intellect only where imprudence fails me I have no other course left, as poverty and obscurity are interdependent'

"On giving further thought to this self-deluded yet ambitious man I came to the conclusion that he had not given thought to one of the most important factors, and that was the question of life-to-come He was mad after political power for which he had to be cruel and unsparing of innocent human lives He got just a fraction of the worldly power and glory, the things he aspired, for a short duration of only eight years Thereafter he fell an easy victim to the treachery of al-Saffāh, and then his intellect did not come to his aid It was the same with al-Mutannabbi too who was so pretentious of his ambitions, but he was also enamoured of worldly success

"My ambition is however, quite different from theirs I aspire for a profound knowledge embracing the entire field of learning, which, I know, I cannot attain I want to achieve a thorough and complete knowledge of every branch of learning which is obviously not possible in the short span of human life. I do not consider anyone perfect in the knowledge of a science so long as he lacks perfection

in another branch, as, for example, if a traditionist is not a master of jurisprudence too I consider his knowledge to be incomplete

"The imperfection of knowledge, I think, can be attributed to the lack of ambition alone. Not only that, to me the end of knowledge means an ability to act on it Thus, what I want is that I should be able to combine with my knowledge the assiduity of Bishr Hāfi and piety of M'arūf Karkhi But it is hardly possible to achieve these along with the pre-occupations of studying and teaching and attending to other mundane affairs And this is not all, I aspire to oblige others but do not want to lie under their obligation, my pre-occupation with the studies is an impediment in the way of my earnings but I detest to be indebted to anyone or to accept gifts from others I ardently desire to have children as well as to be an author of merit and distinction so that these may commemorate my memory, but both these pursuits stand in the way of solitude and contemplation I also do like to enjoy the lawful pleasures but do not possess the means for achieving these and if I devote myself to get at these, I would lose the contentment and peace of mind Similar is the case with other matters, as, for example, I like the delicacies and refinements which my good taste desires All these in fact mean aspiring for diametrical ends What have those persons to do with these lofty ideals who aspire simply for worldly success, wealth, power and position? I too want worldly success but in a manner that I do not have to impair my faith or to expose my learning or virtuous action to any risk or injury. Who can appreciate the demands of my ambition: on the one hand I relish contemplation and prayer, divine manifestation and illumination of heart, but, on the other, I have an inclination for the cultivation of knowledge, teaching and penmanship. The first requires penance, fasting and seclusion while the latter demands nourishment and mixing with the people Spiritual

contraction is unbearable for me, but making the both ends meet for my dependents stands in the way of my spiritual progress I have endured these strains all through my life and submitted to the will of God for, it seems, the path to success and perfection lies through struggles and afflictions For the loftiest ideal is to seek the pleasure of God Almighty, I guard myself of every defilement and take care that not a single moment of my life is spent in any vain effort. Glory be to God, if I succeed in my endeavours; but, I won't mind if I fail for the Prophet has said that the intention of the faithful is better than his action "[1]

Popular Enthusiasm :

The sermons delivered by Ibn al-Jawzi were attended by the caliphs, kings and chiefs of the state besides the common people of Baghdad It is reported that his lectures were normally attended by ten to fifteen thousand persons and sometimes the number went up even to a hundred thousand[2] An eloquent speaker as he was, his sermons breathed an almost tragic urgency behind his message which touched the heart of his audience His soul-stirring calls so carried away the listeners that many of them burst into tears, broke down into hysterical screams or even tore off their shirts Innumerable persons offered earnest repentence for their sins as a result of his sermons It is estimated that Ibn al-Jawzi secured conversion of 20,000 Christians and Jews and over a hundred thousand people made solemn affirmations to lead a virtuous life after listening to his sermons[3]

Ibn al-Jawzi always condemned innovations and unlawful accretions to the Faith in his sermons, asking the people to follow the path enjoined by the Scripture and the Traditions Because of Ibn al-Jawzi's profound knowledge and eloquence as also his popularity the sectaries of heretical factions never dared to

1. *Said al-Khatir*, Vol II, pp 334-337.
2 *Ibid*, Vol I, p 21
3. *Ibid*, Vol I, p 21.

controvert him, with the result that the orthodox school gained a dominating influence The Caliphs and nobles of the time became followers of the Hanbalite school which was distinguished for its strict adherence to the Traditions and the Scripture

Literary Endeavours :

Ibn al-Jawzi produced some of the most distinguished works which had a profound effect on the subsequent academic endeavours His writings helped the suceeeding generations to keep to the right path as enjoined by the *Shariah*

Kitāb ul-Mauzūāt is Ibn al-Jawzi's chief work on the Traditions In this book he has discussed all those spurious or weak Traditions which were then commonly relied upon by the heretics for spreading beliefs contrary to the authorised teachings of the conformist school It is true that Ibn al-Jawzi has been too harsh in his judgments since he has adopted an extremist course in regard to certain issues dealt with by him in this book, nevertheless, he has performed an invaluable task by exposing the fallacies of the heretics and innovators

Talbīs-o-Iblīs is a critical study of the then Muslim society by Ibn al-Jawzi. In this book he has made a critical evaluation of the different classes and sections of the Muslim society of his time, highlighted their weaknesses, misconceptions and aberrations and delineated the causes which had given birth to different vices marring their faith action and behaviour Ibn al-Jawzi has setforth the habits and customs, faults and self-deceits to which the scholars, jurists, preachers, writers, rulers and the pious often fall a prey This book is an outstanding example of the panoramic character of Ibn al-Jawzi's writings, he shows an awareness of the mental, emotional and social attitudes of the different classes of Muslim society along with the beliefs and doctrines of heretic sections, and the subtle ways in which the latter mislead others

Critique of the Scholars and Administrators :

The criticism by Ibn al-Jawzi is at places too severe in the *Talbīs-o-Iblīs*, as is his verdict symbolic of his extremist views, yet

the book contains a mine of useful information since it deals extensively with the vices found among different sections of the people One has generally to agree with Ibn al-Jawzi's analysis which also gives an idea of the liveliness and incisiveness of his intellectual grasp

Criticising the scholars of his time, some of whom were engaged in unnecessary hairsplitting of legal issues, he writes in the *Talbis-o-Iblis*

> "One of the greatest weaknesses of these scholar-jurists is that they have occupied themselves with the vain discussions but they do not pay heed to the Scripture, Traditions and the biographies of the companions of the Prophet which would have had a salutary effect towards the purification of their souls It hardly needs any emphasis that the discussions on trifling issues like the kinds of impurities and the methods of purification would not make one tender-hearted or receptive of the awe of God What is needed by man is the recollection of God and the discourses on the subject so that these may create a longing for success in the life-to-come There is no denying the fact that ethical issues are not beyond the sphere of the *Shari'ah*, but these are by themselves not sufficient for achieving the ultimate objective How can these persons be expected to follow the example of the pious souls of the bygone days, whose faith they profess to own, unless they endeavour to get at the state of ecstacy and propinquity to God attained by them? One should not lose sight of the fact that man is indolent by nature, and if left to himself, he would be inclined to follow the beaten track of his day On the other hand, if he tries to cultivate the knowledge of beliefs and behaviour of the pious and elevated mentors of the former times, he would naturally try to take after their ways A mentor of the yore has well said that he would prefer a Tradition that would make him soft-hearted to a hundred legal decisions of Cadi Shuraih."[1]

1 *Talbis-o-Iblis*, pp 119-120

In his critique of the preachers in the same book, Ibn al-Jawzi observes

> "Most of these preachers are accustomed to using a grandiloquent and heavily embellished language which often means nothing. The greater portions of their discourses are devoted to the accounts of the Prophet Moses, Mount Sinai, Joseph and Gelicho (Zulaikha), or the like, but they have hardly to say anything about the obligatory performances enjoined by the religion or how to avoid sins How can their sermons prevail upon an adulterer to offer penitence; or else convince a woman to be faithful and maintain good relations with her husband ? These discourses are completely devoid of the ethical or religious teachings of the *Shari^cah* This is also one of the reasons for these sermons being so popular, for the truth is always distasteful while falsehood is pleasing "[1]

Further, continuing the same subject, he observes:

> "It often so happens that the preacher is sincere and honest but he wants to win over and dominate the hearts of his audience. He wants to extort admiration from others. A sure symptom of this vice is that if another preacher tries to help him or begins to deliver lectures to his audience, he does not relish it although a sincere person would have welcomed the helping hand in his endeavour."[2]

Ibn al-Jawzi also criticises the scholars for their lack of sincerity. He writes

> "If the students of any scholar leave their teacher to sit at the feet of another savant more learned and reputed than him, he feels a heartburning which is not befitting a sincere scholar Sincere savants and teachers are like physicians who treat the people simply to propitiate God and bless with contentment another physician who is able to cure their patient "[3]

1 *Tablis-o-Iblis*, p 125
2 *Ibid*, p 125
3 *Ibid*, p 131.

In connection with the vices developed by the kings, rulers and administrators, Ibn al-Jawzi writes

> "These people prefer to pattern their behaviour according to their own wishes rather than do what the *Shari*ʿ*ah* enjoins They would cut off the hand or execute a person even though it might not be lawful to do so They labour under the misconception that what they do is essential as a matter of political expediency This means, in other words, that the *Shari*ʿ*ah* is incomplete and they are now making up for that deficiency
>
> "This is in reality a great deception created by the Satan, for, the *Shari'ah* comprises divine guidance for the conduct of our temporal affairs as well, and it is unthinkable that the guidance vouchsafed by God should be deficient God Almighty has ordained · *We have not left anything incomplete in the Scripture*, and also *There is none to amend Our order* Thus, the man who wants to superimpose his own ideas over the *Shari*ʿ*ah* in the garb of political expediency, really claims that the guidance vouchsafed to man by God is imperfect and incomplete This is obviously blasphemous "[1]

Ibn al-Jawzi points out another weakness of the rulers and administrators in these words

> "Besides their persistence on their wrongful ways they also ardently desire to pay a visit to some pious and godly personage for the purpose of seeking his benediction in their favour The devil has brought them round to believe that the solemn invocation of the divine blessings by a godly person would make the burden of their sins lighter This is, however, not so Once a trader whose goods had been withheld by a collector of the toll-tax went to the reputed saint Mālik ibn Dinār and requested him for his help Mālik ibn Dinār went to the collector of the toll-tax who treated him respectfully and released the goods

1 *Talbīs-o-Iblīs*, p 182

of the tradesman Thereafter the official asked Mālik ibn Dinār to pray for him but Mālik replied, 'Ask this purse in which you keep the money acquired illegally, to pray for you How can I invoke blessings for you when countless people curse you?' 'Do you think,' added Mālik, 'that God will accept the entreaties of a single individual in preference to the prayers of a thousand others?' "[1]

At another place he writes

"The rich and the affluent have a great regard for such misguided mystics who approve of the hearing of songs and playing on musical instruments They are lavish in spending their riches on these mystics but would not part with a single shell for the sake of scholars and savants As a matter of fact, the scholars are like physicians on whose advice a man spends his money grudgingly only when he falls ill On the other hand, the misguided mystics and the musicians and singers accompanying them are like courtiers and flatterers who are normally hangers-on of every wealthy person [2]

"Likewise, they are devoted to the ascetics and other persons of assumed piety, and prefer them to the doctors of religion They would readily submit to a charlatan attired as a mendicant, if he practises a pious fraud upon them they are easily led astray and begin to sneer at the scholars for not being ascetics However, to hold the ascetics in higher esteem than the scholars is simply ignorance and an insult to the *Sharīʿah* These misguided persons should really be thankful to God that they were not present during the life-time of the Apostle of God for they would have turned apostate if they had seen him taking wives, eating, wearing clothes and enjoying honey."[3]

In his critique of the masses Ibn al-Jawzi writes:

"Satan has mislead the masses to believe that attending

1 *Talbīs-o-Iblīs*, p 134

2 *Ibid*, p 373

3 *Ibid*, pp 388-389

of religious discourses and raising a wail of woe are highly meritorious acts and the sole purpose of delivering these sermons This is perhaps because the people have been told about the merits of listening to these discourses but they do not know that the end of these sermons is reformation of their own morals and rectitude of their behaviour. Nor do they appear to be aware that whatever they listen to in these lectures shall be cited as an evidence against them on the Doomsday I personally know a number of persons who are attending such discourses for a number of years They get excited on hearing these sermons and burst into tears but they still persist in accepting interest, cheating others in their trade, remaining unmindful of the religious performances, and disobedience to their parents Satan has led them to believe that their presence in these sermons, their lamentations and fits of crying will atone for their neglected duties and the sins of omission and commission There are also others who think that accompanying the pious and godly persons or paying visits to them shall be enough for expiation of their sins "[1]

In regard to the rich and affluent, Ibn al-Jawzi has the following to say

"Many among these persons spend lavishly on the construction of mosques or bridges but their object really is to become famous and win over the people by such acts of piety Another objective they have in view is that they should be remembered after their death, and, for that purpose they get their names inscribed on the foundation-stones of these edifices. Had they undertaken the construction of these works for the pleasure of God, they would have been content with the knowledge that God is aware of what they do If these persons were to be asked to get simply a wall constructed without having their names inscribed on it, they would never agree to it

1 *Talbis-o-Iblis* pp 393-394

"Likewise, these persons donate candle-sticks to the mosques during the month of *Ramadhan* although these remain without light during the remaining part of the year. They cannot, obviously, evoke admiration of others by providing oil for daily lighting, which they hope to attain by donation of a single candle-stick during the month of *Ramadhan*."[1]

Said al-Khatir:

Not strictly an autobiographical work, the book also contains reminiscences of Ibn al-Jawzi, his ideas and feelings and personal experiences In describing the incidents he had come across, Ibn al-Jawzi frankly admits his mistakes and weaknesses Ibn al-Jawzi often addresses his own self to criticise its longings and aspirations, gives an account of his mental and emotional states, describes his social experiences with the help of common and everyday happenings and relates the wisdom derived from the trials and tribulations, rough and tumble of life or his dealings with women, friends and servants. An outstanding feature of this book is its immaculate sincerity and simplicity. The book is also noted for the easy eloquence and lucidity of its style, which marks the first attempt made by an Arab writer in this direction, since the then prevailing style was to use a heavily embellished language in the literary works

Ibn al-Jawzi possessed a special gift to draw out wisdom from insignificant occurrences which many of us come across and pass over without paying any heed to them Here is an example from the *Said al-Khatir*

"I saw two labourers who were carrying a heavy beam. Both were humming a song, when one recited a verse, the other listened to it attentively and then repeated it or came out with another verse in reply to the first. I thought that if they do not do so they would have a greater consciousness of their exertion By singing the labourers made their work

1 *Talbis-o-Iblis*, p 395

easier On further reflection I found that by engaging themselves in singing the minds of the labourers get a little respite, they get busy in another work for a short duration and thus refresh themselves This diversion also decreases the consciousness of the burden by diverting attention from the exertion of their work My attention was diverted from it to the burden of responsibilities and obligations enjoined by the *Shariah* I thought that perhaps the consciousness of these liabilities constitutes the heaviest burden on the self of man while the greatest effort lies in controlling and checking the propensities and impulses for which the self has a liking Thus, I arrived at the conclusion that one should cover the path of endurance with the help of giving it necessary respite and by allowing the consciousness to refresh itself by yielding to lawful pleasures A poet has rightly said that when the caravan gets tired of travelling for the whole night, tell the people that the dawn is at hand and that they would get the needed respite during the day.

"A similar story is told about Bishr Hāfi[1] who was going somewhere along with a companion The friend of Bishr Hāfi got thirsty and he asked Bishr to wait a bit so that he could get water from a well Bishr, however, advised him to wait till they reached the next well, and then to the next one After they had covered a considerable distance, Bishr told his friend that the life in this terrestrial world is also a journey which can be completed in that manner. The truth is that whoever is aware of the fact alluded to by Bishr, will console his self, cheer it up when in distress and assure it of lessening the burden so that it may bear the weight of its responsibilities with endurance A certain preceptor of the times past addressed his self thus 'O my self, if I check thee from thy fancies and attractions, it is only on account of my affection for

1 227 A H /841 A D

thee' Another master and devine, Bā Yazid al-Bustami,[1] once said 'I used to lead my wailing self flooded with tears towards God, then it gradually got familiar with the way and began to forge ahead cheerfully' It should thus be remembered that it is absolutely necessary to console and enliven the self so that it may bear its burden patiently"[2]

At another place he writes

"I have seen that when hounds pass by the side of wild dogs, the latter bark at them and try to chase them. The wild dogs are envious of the hounds because of their dog-belts and clothings, but the hounds do not pay any attention to them as if they do not belong to the same species The wild dogs are fat and clumsy, and are not trustworthy, the hounds, on the other hand, are lean, well-proportioned and quick They are also well-trained and trustworthy It is out of the fear or on account of the gratitude to their master that they bring back the game to him I have drawn two conclusions from this comparison First, the frame and appearance of a man has a bearing upon his morals If the former has a finer countenance, the latter would also be of a nice demeanour Secondly, nobody is envious towards one whom he does not consider his equal Likewise, a man who has been favoured by God with faith and wisdom bears no ill-will against those who lack these qualities even though the latter might be moved by jealousy towards him In fact the faithful does not consider the faithless worthy of his attention, for, their spheres of hopes and aspirations are quite different one harbours a feeling of hostility at another's good in this world but the other aspires for success in the world-to-come There is a world of difference between the two"[3]

1 d 261 A H /874 A D

2 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol I, pp 146-147

3 *Ibid* Vol III, pp 639-640

Dialogue with the Self:

Ibn al-Jawzi sometimes applies the method of tracing an incident to its source so as to discover the general principles underlying that phenomenon Once he prayed to God along with another saintly person The prayer was answered by God and this made him to think as to whose prayer had found favour with God Here Ibn al-Jawzi analyses the incident with the help of self-dialogue

> "Once I was confronted with a difficulty for which I had to invoke Divine blessings and succour Accordingly, I prayed to God along with another godly person I felt that my prayer was about to be answered by God but I thought that it was not on account of my beseechings but because of the prayer of that pious soul I said to myself I am aware of my own sins and weaknesses which should not apparently allow my prayers to be answered, but who knows that God did not really accede to my own entreaties? I felt that although the reverend man of God who prayed for me should be free of those vices which, I knew, I suffered from, still there was a difference between him and myself I had a sense of regret and self-reproach for my sins while he was cheerful and enlivened And, it is not unoften that broken-hearted penitence is more propitious on occasions like this
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> "There is, however, another matter in which both of us stood on an equal footing None of us solicited the favour of God on the ground of our moral excellence Now, if in these circumstances, I owned my mistakes and humbly prayed to God 'Take pity on me, Oh Lord, for I am empty-handed', there was every likelihood of my supplication having being granted Also, it is just possible that the other person might have had an eye on his actions which would have caused hinderance in the acceptance of his prayer
>
> "Therefore, O my Self, thou shouldst not make it insufferable for an already broken-hearted man like me I

am aware of my guilt, and I do also confess my sins, while, at the same time, I am aware of what I implore, and have a faith in the beneficence of my God to Whom I prefer my entreaties. God may bless that devoted soul if he lacks this quality, but so far as I am concerned, the confession of my guilt is my most valuable possession."[1]

At another place he again portrays his inner-struggle in these words:

"I was once undecided about a matter that was improper and unbecoming under the *Sharīʿah* but my mind had brought forth certain arguments in its favour which apparently made it look lawful to me. In truth, however, it was nothing but specious reasoning because, as I later found out, it was manifestly abominable. However, I addressed myself to God and implored Him to ward off this state of indecision

"I also began the recitation of the Qur'ān so as to set my mind at rest As I had to teach the commentary of the Chapter 'Joseph'[2] I began my recitation from there I was so engrossed with the problem I had in mind that I did not pay much attention to what I was reading, but I was taken aback when I recited the verse, *He said I seek refuge in Allah! Lo! he is my lord, who hath treated me honourably*[3] I felt as if this verse had been revealed for me I said to myself. Didst thou follow it? Joseph was free, he was wrongfully made a slave and sold to Potiphar Joseph felt so grateful to Potiphar that he called him his lord, although neither Joseph was a slave nor Potiphar a master The chief reason for this gratefulness of Joseph to Potiphar was that the latter had treated him honourably 'Now think of thy own self', I said to myself 'Thou art really slave of a Master who has been a benefactor ever since thy

1 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol I, pp 157-158
2 Chapter XII of the Qur'ān
3 *Yūsuf* 23

birth Nobody knows how many times he has over-looked thy mistakes Dost thou remember how He provided thy needs? It was by His grace that thou acquired knowledge and earned thy living He guarded thee from every danger and guided thee to adopt the right course He saved thee from the hostility of thy enemies. He bestowed on thee a goodly appearance as well as intellectual gift He enabled thee to master the sciences in a short duration although others could not acquire these over a much longer period He also favoured thee with eloquence, intellect and memory, caused the people to show thee kindness and reverence, and made it easy for thee to procure thy livelihood without having to lie under an obligation to others It is not possible, in truth and reality, to thank Him for the innumerable favours He has bestowed on thee the good-looking countenance, well-proportioned limbs, worthy demeanour, refined taste, intellectual grit, discrimination to adopt the right path and to avoid lewdness, opportunity to acquire knowledge of the Traditions and to act on it—Verily, *if ye would count the bounty of Allah ye cannot reckon it* [1] How many of thy enemies laid snares for thee, but God saved thee, how they wanted to discredit thee, but He exalted thee, how many favours were granted to thee, but denied to others, how many people left this world broken-hearted, but thou were crowned with success. Dost thou not see that thou are in good health, have sound intellect and a wholesome faith, thy knowledge is abounding, thy aspirations are fulfilled and if thou art ever thwarted in any desire, God makes thee patient and forbearing till thou knowest that it was really profitable that thy desire did not meet with success It would be impossible to recount all the favours of God bestowed on thee, since, the unknown bounties invested by God on man are far in excess of those that he can comprehend Then, how didst thou consider it lawful to do something which was considered

1 *Ibrāhīm* 34

unclean by God Almighty *I seek refuge in Allah! Lo! He is my lord, Who hath treated me honourably Lo! wrong-doers never prosper*"[1]

Ibn al-Jawzi narrates another personal experience of the same nature

"Once I acted on a legal opinion which was upheld by certain schools of jurisprudence but rejected by others. However, I felt an uneasiness as if I had committed a sacrilege which was causing me spiritual contraction and a drift towards unorthodoxy With a deepening sense of bereavement and sullenness, I realised as if my own Self was asking me 'You didn't act against the advice of the jurists Why is then this feeling of privation?' I replied 'O my insinuating Self, I have two answers to thy question. First, thou turned aside from the teachings of thy own juristic school If thou had been asked to pronounce a legal opinion on this question, thou wouldst not have advised it thus' 'I won't have acted on it', interjected the Self, 'if I had not considered it lawful.' I replied: 'No, thou wouldst not even advise others to act likewise.' 'And the second reason is,' I added, 'that thou shouldst be happy over the gloom experienced by thee, for had thou not been already favoured with the illumination thou wouldst not have had this feeling of bereavement.' 'But I dislike the gloom coming over me,' replied the Self 'Then thou shouldst make up thy mind,' said I, 'to give up the disputed act Thou thinkest that it has been made lawful through consensus of opinion Still thou shouldst decide to renounce it simply for the fear of God' The Self was then saved of the spiritual contraction and gloominess after it had acted likewise."[2]

Biographical Studies:

Ibn al-Jawzi was primarily a traditionist and jurist but he

1 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol II, pp 283-285
2 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 304

always emphasised the importance of the study of biographical accounts of the pious and saintly masters of the olden times for the purpose of purification of soul and implanting a religious zeal He has advised the scholars, jurists and traditionists in the *Talbis-o-Iblis* and the *Said al-Khatir* to pursue this branch of learning Speaking of his own experience in this regard, he writes in the *Said al-Khatir*

"I feel that the study of juristic sciences and Traditions is not sufficient to instil a tenderness of heart which enables it to attract the divine grace The only way to acquire this faculty is to study the inspiring biographies of the masters who were pure of heart The knowledge pertaining to the lawful and unlawful matters does not produce the warmth and tenderness of heart This is brought about by effective incidents narrated in the Traditions and the biographical accounts of the mentors of yore Those teachers of the olden times had realised the true content of faith and lived up to it instead of simply acquiring a knowledge of it What I am recommending to you is my personal experience I have seen that the traditionists and their students generally devote their entire attention to the chain of narrators and the canons framed for the reception or rejection of the Traditions Similarly, the jurists are extremely fond of the science of dialectics for gaining a victory over their opponents. How can these make one tender-hearted? Formerly the people used to visit the men of God to pattern their behaviour after the example set by these pious souls instead of acquiring knowledge from them And, indeed, this is the end of knowledge Therefore, let it be understood very clearly that it is absolutely necessary for you to include the study of the biographies of the pious and reverend souls in your curriculum of the Law and the Traditions "[1]

1 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol II, pp 302-303,

Biographical Writings:

Ibn al-Jawzi has accordingly written the biographies of a number of luminaries such has Hasan al-Basri, Caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz, Sufyān Thauri[1], Ibrahim ibn Ad'ham,[2] Bishr Hāfi[3], Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Maʿrūf Karkhi[4] and others[5] In addition to these biographies, he has also written a compendium of reputed scholars, writers, saints, etc. in four volumes under the title of *Sifat us-Safwah* This book is really a revised edition of the *Hilyatul Auliya* by Abū Nuaʿim Asbahāni which was edited by Ibn al-Jawzi In revising the book he has kept in view the principles of historical criticism and deleted the spurious accounts related by Abū Nuaʿim.

Study of History:

Ibn al-Jawzi held the view that along with the study of religious sciences like the Law and the Traditions, History should also be studied by the students because the lack of knowledge in this branch of learning had led certain scholars to commit unpardonable mistakes. He, therefore, advised that every student should have at least as much knowledge of history that he does not commit any grevious mistake. Writes he in the *Said al-Khatir*:

> "A scholar-jurist must be conversant with all the related sciences A jurist has to have the knowledge of other sciences like History, Traditions, Lexicology, etc. on which he has very often to rely upon. I heard a jurist saying that Sheikh Shibli and Cadi Shuraik had once got together in a meeting. I wondered at the ignorance of the jurist who did not know that the two were not contemporaries. Another scholar once said in a lecture that since Caliph

1 d 161, A H /778 A D

2 d 165 A H /782 A D

3 d 227 A H /841 A D

4. d. 200 A H /818 A D

5 Ibn al-Jawzi has made a mention of these books in *Said al-Khatir*, (*vide* Vol I, pp 137, 154, 175, Vol II, p 363 and Vol III, pp 562, 604, and 606) Out of these the first two have been published

ᶜAli had bathed the dead boby of Fatima, their marriage did not terminate even after the death of the latter I thought, God may help this man, for he does not know that Caliph ᶜAli had married the niece of Fatima, Umamah bint Zainab, after Fatima had passed away How would it have been possible if their marriage had continued after the death of Fatima? I have seen similar grevious mistakes committed by al-Ghazali in the *Ihyā᾿ ᶜUlūm id-Din.* I was surprised to see how he could mix up the incidents happening at quite different times I have compiled all such errors of *Iyhā᾿* in one of my books Another scholar, Sheikh Abul Maᶜali al-Jawa᾿ini has mentioned another curious story in his book entitled *Ash-Shāmil*, on the subject of jurisprudence He writes that certain Batinites have related that Hallāj, Abū Saᶜid al-Janābi Qarmati and Ibn al-Muqannᶜa had conspired to overthrow the then government by creating dissatisfaction among the masses Each one of them undertook to raise insurrection in a certain country and in accordance with that agreement al-Janābi went to Ahs᾿a, Ibn al-Muqannᶜa to Tarkistan and Hallāj to Baghdad The two confidants of Hallāj, were, however, of the opinion that he would surely lose his life because it was not possible to dupe the people of Baghdad If the narrator of this story only knew that Hallāj was not a contemporary of Ibn al-Muqannᶜa, he would not have given credence to this story Mansūr had ordered the execution of Ibn al-Muqannᶜa in 144 A H while Abū Saᶜid al-Janābi Qarmati came to prominence in 286 A H and Hallāj was killed in 309 A H Thus Qarmati and Hallāj were almost contemporaneous but Ibn al-Muqannᶜa was born much earlier There is thus no question of the three meeting and conspiring together

This would amply make it clear that every scholar should have a grounding in the sciences related to his own. It is discreditable for a traditionist that he should not be able to give a legal opinion in any matter simply because

he has been engrossed in the study of Traditions and has no time to pay attention to other branches of religious learning Similarly, it does not behove a jurist to be unable to explain the meanings of any Tradition. I implore God that He may endow us with an ambition that may not allow us to put up with the least indolence."[1]

Historical Writings :

Ibn al-Jawzi did not merely criticise the scholars for not being well versed in history, but he also wrote a comprehensive history of Islamic peoples from the inception of Islam till 574 A H in ten volumes In this work entitled as *al-Muntazam fi-Tārīkh il-Mulūk wal-Umam* Ibn al-Jawzi first gives the year and then narrates the important incidents and events of that year along with the pre-eminent personages who died during the year, followed by an account of their achievements. This work of Ibn al-Jawzi thus combines chronicle with scientific history interwoven with a harmonious account of the notable personalities [2]

Another historical work of smaller size by Ibn al-Jawzi is *Talqīh-o-Fuhūm-i-Ahl-il-Athar Fi-ᶜAyūn Al-Tārīkh Wa-Sayar.* This is a compendium of historical information which has also been published [3]

Oratory of Ibn al-Jawzi :

The chroniclers of his time agree that Ibn al-Jawzi was a gifted orator who could draw large crowds In the *Said al-Khatir* he has mentioned his internal struggle which once almost prevailed upon him to pay absolutely no attention to the rhetoric and the choice of words in his speeches as thus could be construed as a show of oratory However, he gave up the idea since on further reflection he came to the conclusion that eloquence was a

1 *Said al-Khatir*, Vol III, pp 604-606

2 The last five volumes of this book have been published by Da'irat ul-Ma'ārif, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India

3 Published by Syed Muhammad Yūsuf of Tonk, India

God given gift, a perfection and not a defection, which ought to be employed for the propagation of faith Similarly, Ibn al-Jawzi entertained a desire, more than once, to give up preaching and withdraw himself to a life of complete seclusion and meditation However, he won over his self to follow the right path by arguing the issue with it He ultimately decided that this was a suggestion hinted at by the Satan who did not like to see thousands of persons carried away by his eloquence towards the path of moral and spiritual reformation The prophets of God were primarily preachers and they also associated with the people The self of the man being indolent and abhorring exertion wants to turn its back upon the world It is also tempted by the love of fame, honour and popularity which can easily be gained through winning over the hearts of the people by retiring from the world Thus Ibn al-Jawzi reasoned with his Self to counter the whisperings of the Satan who wanted him to abandon his mission of preaching and inviting people towards the path of divine guidance Ibn al-Jawzi thus continued to press his intellectual gifts for more than half a century to the task of serving his people and revivification of the faith

Ibn al-Jawzi died on a Friday night in 597 A H The entire population of Baghdad suspended its work to attend his funeral prayers which was held in the mosque of (Jamᶜa) Mansūr It was a memorable day in the history of the metropolis, innumerable people were found sobbing for the departed teacher The annalyist reports that quite a few inhabitants of Baghdad spent their nights throughout the ensuing month of Ramadhan at his grave offering prayers and reciting the Qur'ān for the peace of his soul

CHAPTER X

NUR UD-DIN ZANGI AND SALAH UD-DIN AYYUBI

The Crusaders:

The commonwealth of Islam was devoting its attention to the educational and intellectual pursuits, on the one hand, while Christendom was consolidating its might to wipe off the entire Islamic world, on the other. Europe had been nourishing an intense hatred for Islam ever since the Arabs had taken their arms to the eastern possessions of the Byzantine empire. All the holy places of Christendom including the birth-place of Jesus Christ were under the Muslims. This afforded, by itself, a sufficient cause to Europe for breathing vengeance on Islam but the existence of powerful Islamic States and their continued inroads into the Christian countries did not give them the heart to covet the Muslim territories. However, the downfall of the Seljukid empire and the unsettled conditions in Asia Minor and Syria towards the end of the fifth century A.H. were in many respects calculated to favour the success of Europe. At the same time, the Christendom got a wandering preacher in the person of Peter the Hermit who distinguished himself by his fiery zeal and ability to carry away by his eloquence thousands of the poor Christians from one corner of Europe to another. Apart from these, numerous other factors, social and economic, contributed to surround the religious venture of the Crusaders with a hallow of romance tainted with avarice, ambition and lust.[1]

The first eastward march of the Crusaders towards Syria commenced in 490 A.H.; within two years the great cities of

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1. For detailed account of these reasons see EBR, Vol VI, Art "Crusades."

Edessa and Antioch and many fortresses were captured and by 492 A H the Christians had regained possession of Jerusalem itself Within a few years the greater part of Palestine and the coast of Syria, Tortosa, Acre, Tripolis and Sidon fell into the hands of the Crusaders "The Crusaders penetrated like a wedge between the old wood and the new", says Stanley Lane-Poole, "and for a while seemed to cleave the trunk of Mohammedan empire into splinters "[1] The capture of Jerusalem threw the fanatical horde of Crusaders into a frenzy which gave rein to their wildest passions a savagery which their own writers are ashamed to confess, and unable to deny Here is a graphic account of the massacre of Muslims after the fall of Jerusalem

> "So terrible, it is said, was the carnage which followed that the horses of the crusaders who rode up to the mosque of Omar were knee-deep in the stream of blood Infants were seized by their feet and dashed against the walls or whirled over the battlements, while the Jews were all burnt alive in the synagogue "
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> "On the next day the horrors of that which had preceded it were deliberately repeated on a larger scale Tancred had given a guarantee of safety to 300 captives In spite of his indignant protest these were all brought out and killed, and a massacre followed in which the bodies of men, women and children were hacked and hewn until their fragments lay tossed together in heaps The work of slaughter ended, the streets of the city were washed by Saracen prisoners "[2]

The fall of Jerusalem marks the beginning of the decline of Islamic power and the increasing strength of the Christian West which was successful in due course in establishing four Latin Kingdoms of Jerusalem, Edessa, Antioch and Tripoli in the territory bordering the eastern end of the Mediterranean from the Euphrates to Egypt, exposing the entire world of Islam to the

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1 *Saladin*, p 25

2 EBR, Vol VI, p 627

danger of annihilation The ambition of the warriors of the Cross ran so high that Reginald of Chatillon once expressed the desire to cross over to Arabia with the fell design of sacking Mecca and Madina and taking the corpse of the blessed Prophet out of his grave![1] Never after the rising of the Apostates following the death of the Prophet had Islam been exposed to such a grave danger. The existence of Islam being at stake for the second time in its history, it had to take the field for a decisive battle with the Latin West.

The opening decades of the sixth century A H. marked the dissension of the Islamic East After the death of Malik Shah, the last great Seljukid ruler, civil war broke out among his successors and the empire split into many separate principalities There was then no ruler who had the capacity to unify the forces of Islam in order to stand on the defensive against the increasing pressure from the north-west Stanley Lane-Poole has rightly said that.

> "It was a time of uncertainty and hesitation—of amazed attendance upon the dying struggles of a mighty empire; an interregnum of chaos until the new forces should have gathered their strength, in short, it was the precise moment when a successful invasion from Europe was possible"[2]

Atābek ʿImād ud-dīn Zangi:

At this critical moment, when the despair of the Muslims was at its height, a lucky star rose in the eastern horizon. As it had happened earlier, Islam got a champion for its cause from an unexpected quarter, who appeared on the scene to save the situation. Lane-Poole writes.

> "It was but necessary to preach the *Jihad*—the Holy War—and to show them a commander whose courage and military genius all must respect, and the Turkman chiefs and vassals would at once become a Church Militant with

1. *Saladin*, p 177
2. *Ibid.*, p 25

whom the Crusaders would have very seriously to reckon. The leader was found in Imād-ed-dīn Zengy."[1]

ᶜImād ud-dīn Zangi was the son of one of the court chamberlains of Malik Shah. Sultan Mahmūd conferred on him the government of Mosul along with the title of Atābek the Tutor of the Princes. After consolidating his power in Syria and Iraq, ᶜImād ud-dīn advanced against Edessa (Roha) which was one of the strongest fortresses held by the Crusaders, and formed the centre of their aggressive inroads into the neighbouring territories held by the Muslims. ᶜImād ud-dīn captured Edessa on the 6th of Jamadi ul-Akhir, 539 A. H. According to Arab historians it was the "conquest of conquests" for Edessa was regarded by the Christians as the "stoutest prop of the Latin Kingdom." The valley of the Euphratus was thus finally saved from the marauding excursions of the Crusaders. Shortly after achieving this brilliant victory ᶜImād ud-dīn was assassinated by a slave on the 5th of Rabᶜī ut-Thani, 541 A. H. Thus perished one of the greatest heroes of Islam who had opened the way for a counter-attack on behalf of Islam against the Crusaders. However, the task left incomplete by the great Atābek was taken far ahead by his illustrious son al-Malik al-ᶜAdil Nūr ud-dīn Zangi.

Al-Malik al-ᶜAdil Nūr ud-dīn Zangi:

Nūr ud-dīn Mahmūd[2] was now the Sultan of Aleppo on whom devolved the responsibility of the championship of Islam. The constant aim of his efforts was the expulsion of the Latin Christians from Syria and Palestine and to this object he remained faithful throughout his life. For him *Jihād* with the Crusaders was the greatest act of piety crowned with the Divine blessing. In 559 A. H. Nūr ud-dīn Zangi captured Hārim a stronghold of the Crusaders in the north after defeating the united armies of the Franks and the Greeks. It is related that ten thousand Christians were slain in this battle and innumerable Crusaders

1. *Saladin*, p 34.
2. Known to the West as Noradinus

were taken prisoners along with the most of their chieftains, such as Bohemond, Prince of Antioch, Raymond of the court of Tripoli, Joscelin III, and the Greek general, Duke of Calamar. Soon after it the fortress of Banias[1] (Cæsarea Philippi) at the foot of Mount Hermon, fell before the arms of Nūr ud-dīn, encircling the Crusaders from two sides The significance of this political change has been described thus by Lane-Poole

> "The possession of the Nile by Nūr-ed-dīn's general (Salāh ud-dīn) placed the Kingdom of Jerusalem as it were in a cleft stick, squeezed on both sides by armies controlled by the same power The harbours of Demietta and Alexandria gave the Moslems the command of a fleet, and enabled them to cut off the communications of the Crusaders with Europe, stop the annual pilgrim ships and sieze their supplies."[2]

Nūr ud-dīn had thus practically outmanoeuvered the Crusaders in Palestine but his greatest ambition was to drive them out of Jerusalem This was, however, to be accomplished by Salāh ud-dīn but its foundation was laid by the departing sovereign, Nūr ud-dīn, who died in 569 A H., in his fifty-sixth year, of a disease of quinsy The news of the death of Nūr ud-dīn, writes Lane-Poole, "fell like a thunderbolt among the Saracens "

Character of Nūr ud-dīn:

Muslim historians describe Nūr ud-dīn as a chivalrous, just and generous ruler, most tender-hearted, pious and high-minded, and a fearless warrior ready to expose himself in the front of every battle True to his name 'Mahmūd' he was acclaimed as one of the best of the kings, as the historians tell us, he was more capable and enlightened than his predecessors

Ibn al-Jawzi who was a contemporary of Nūr ud-dīn, writes of him in *al-Muntazam*:

> "Nūr ud-dīn marched upon the enemy at the frontiers of his realm and succeeded in regaining more than 50 towns

1 *Saladin*, p 84 and *Al-Kāmil*, Vol. XI, p 124,

2 *Saladin*, p 103

> from the infidels. He led a life better than most of the kings and sultans Peace and tranquillity reigned in his kingdom There is, in fact, a lot to be said in his praise He always considered himself as a subordinate of the Caliph at Baghdad Before he died he abolished all oppressive and illegal imposts within his territories He was extremely simple in his habits and loved the pious and scholars."[1]

Another historian, Ibn Khallikān, who is known for his objective assessment of the characters and events says

> "He was a just and pious king, always eager to follow the observances prescribed by the *Sharīʿah* and a generous patron of scholars in whom he took great interest He was distinguished for his keen desire to take part in the *Jehād*, he spent his income on the pious foundations and welfare of the poor, and had set up educational institutions in all the principal cities of Syria It is difficult to enumerate all of his qualities or the monuments by way of public works left by him "[2]

Ibn al-Athīr, the reputed historian and author of the *Tārīkh al-Kāmil*, writes

> "I have studied the careers of the rulers of the past but excepting the first four Caliphs and ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz there has been no prince so liberal and pious, law-abiding and just (as Nūr ud-dīn)."[3]

Ibn al-Athīr's testimony carries a special weight because he was in his fourteenth year when Nūr ud-dīn died. He writes about the character and disposition of Nūr ud-dīn as follows

> "He met his personal expenses from the property he had acquired out of the proceeds of his own share in the booty taken in war He had set apart three shops situated in Hams which fetched an annual rent of 20 *Dinars* for meeting his household expenses Once, when his wife

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1 *Al-Muntazam*, Vol X, pp 248-249

2 Ibn-Khallikān, Vol IV, p. 272

3 *Al-Kāmil*, Vol IX, p 163

complained to him that the income from the shops was insufficient; he dryly replied 'I have nothing more to give you Whatever else you see, I hold in sacred trust for the Muslims and I am no more than their trustee. I would not like to be consigned to Hell for your sake by spending anything on ourselves out of the public funds.'

"He used to devote a greater part of his time after the nightfall in prayers. Belonging to the Hanafite school, he had studied jurisprudence and the Traditions but the narrow dogmatism was entirely foreign to his character

"He was distinguished for his remarkable love for justice which could be seen, for example, in the fact that he had abolished all customs, dues and tithes throughout his vast kingdom comprising Egypt, Syria and Mosul He was always eager to observe, in exact details, the disciplines and injunctions of the *Shari^cah* Once he was summoned to appear before a court He sent the word to the Cadi that no preferential treatment should be accorded to him when he appeared before the court as a defendant. Although he won the case against the plaintiff, he gave up his claim in favour of his opponent saying 'I had already decided to do so, but I thought that perhaps my vanity wanted me to avoid attending the court of law I, therefore, decided to appear before the court and now I give up what has now been decided in my favour' He had set up a special tribunal known as *Dar-ul-^cAdl* (House of Justice) where he along with a Cadi, personally heard the cases to check arbitrariness on the part of high officials, princes, etc.

"On the battle-field he earned the admiration of everyone by his personal bravery He always took two bows and quivers to the battle-field. Once somebody said to him · 'For God's sake, don't expose to danger your own self as well as Islam.' 'Who is Mahmūd', retorted Nūr ud-dīn, 'that you speak thus of him? Who defended the country and Islam before me? Verily, there is no defender save Allah.'

"He held the scholars in high esteem and always stood up to receive them. He took keen interest in their affairs and patronised them with generous gifts but despite his humility and simplicity, he had such a commanding personality that the people were seized with fright in his presence The fact is that it is not possible to relate all his qualities in the limited compass of this book"[1]

Unflinching Faith :

Nūr ud-dīn had set his heart on the expulsion of the Crusaders from the holy land. He had also an unflinching faith in his mission and a firm conviction that he would ultimately succeed in his endeavour

Nūr ud-dīn had to suffer a defeat at Hisn al-Akrād in 558 A H, when he was taken unawares by the Christians[2] Soon thereafter he was making camp near Hams, a few miles from the enemy encampment Some of his well-wishers counselled Nūr ud-dīn that it was not advisable to remain so near the enemy after suffering a defeat. Nūr ud-dīn, however, bade them to keep quiet and said "I won't care for the enemy if I had only a thousand horses with me. By God, I would not go under a roof till I have taken revenge from the enemy." Even after the defeat Nūr ud-dīn continued with his generous grants to the learned, the poor and godly persons When it was suggested to him that the amount earmarked for charitable purposes might be diverted for strengthening the forces at that critical juncture, Nūr ud-dīn replied angrily "But I hope the succour of God only on account of their benedictions and prayers The Holy Prophet has said that Allah causes sustenance and His help to come down on earth only for the sake of the poor and the oppressed How can I desist from helping those who fight for me when I am fast asleep And lo! they never miss their targets, yet, you want me to help those who fight only when they see me in their midst

1 *Al-Kāmil*, Vol XI, pp 163-164

2 *Ibid*, Vol XI, p 119

on the battle-field, and they often succeed or fail in their endeavours. The poor have a right to derive benefit from the public revenues and so how can I ask them to forgo what is due to them?"[1]

Nūr ud-dīn made preparations to avenge his defeat he distributed large sums to his followers, sent letters to all the chiefs and governors for sending fresh levies, and, at the same time, requested the pious and devoted to pray for his success His efforts created a new upsurge throughout his vast dominion to fight the Crusaders for the defence of Islam Nūr ud-dīn met the united armies of the Franks and the Greeks, and in one of the severest battles which took place under the walls of Hārim, he achieved a splendid victory over his foes which gave him control over Hārim and a few other fortresses[2]

The unflinching faith of Nūr ud-dīn can well be imagined by an incident reported by the historians While he was laying a seige to Banias (Cæsarea Philippi), his brother, Nusrat ud-dīn lost an eye Nūr ud-dīn, on meeting his brother, said "If you only knew the divine reward for losing your eye, you would ardently desire to lose the other one too"[3]

Salah ud-dīn Ayyūbi[4]:

Salah ud-dīn was, in truth and reality, a standing miracle of the Prophet of Islam and a manifest sign of the truthfulness and authenticity of his message.

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1 *Al-Kāmil* Vol XI, p 119

2 *Ibid*, Vol XI, pp 122-123

3 *Ibid*, Vol XI, p 123

4 Salah ud-dīn Ayyūbi was not a descendant of Abū Ayyūb Ansari, the famous companion of the Prophet Salah ud-dīn called himself Ayyūbi after the name of his father, Ayyūb who was a Kurd belonging to eastern Azarbaijan It seems that his grandfather had migrated to Baghdad with his two sons Ayyūb Najm ud dīn and Sherkoh Asad ud-dīn and thereafter settled in Takrait where he died Ayyūb and Sherkoh entered into state service under Mujahid ud-dīn Bahroz, the police chief under Sultan Mas'ūd Ayyūb Najm ud-dīn later got an employment under 'Imad ud-dīn Zangi who made him the custodian of a castle in Balbek

Salah ud-dīn was brought up like other Kurd youths of moderate means,[1] studying the coventional sciences and the art of warfare Nobody could have predicted before Salah ud-dīn captured Egypt and confronted the Crusaders, that this young man would one day emerge as the conqueror of Jerusalem and a great Defender of the Faith, and that he would achieve such an eminence as to be looked upon by posterity as a brilliant example for his ardent zeal and courage in fighting the infidels, or, for his sterling virtues which could rightly be envied even by the most pious and pure in heart Describing the youthful days of Salah ud-dīn, Lane-Poole says

> "As the favoured governor's son, he naturally enjoyed a privileged position, but, far from exhibiting any symptoms of future greatness, he was evidently a shining example of that tranquil virtue which shuns 'the last infirmity of the noble minds' "[2]

God had, however, destined him to become the most renowned leader of his time, and when God wills a thing He provides the means therefor · His master Nūr ud-dīn ordered him to proceed to Egypt Cadi Baha' ud-dīn ibn Shaddād, a trusted councilor of Salah ud-dīn, writes that the latter had confessed it to him that he had gone to Egypt dragged against his will, like one driven to his death It was the fulfilment of what the Qur'ān says *But it may happen that ye hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that ye love a thing which is bad for you*[3]

Transformation of his life :

Sahab ud-dīn was, however, completely a changed man after assuming power in Egypt Conviction dawned upon him that God had to take some work from him which would be thwarted by the pursuits of pleasure

Ibn Shaddād is on record that "no sooner did he assume the over-lordship of Egypt, the world and its pleasures lost all

1 *Saladin* p 72

2. *Ibid*, p 72

3 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 31 (Italics Quotation from the Qur'ān, *Al-Baqarah*, 216)

significance in his eyes. With a heart-felt sense of gratitude for the favour bestowed by God on him he gave up drinking, renounced the temptations of pleasure, and took to the life of sweat and toil which went on increasing with the passage of time"[1] Lane-Poole too has the same story to tell

He says

> "On his side, Saladin began to order his life more rigorously Devout as he had always shewn himself, he became even more strict and austere He put aside the thought of pleasure and the love of ease, adopted a Spartan rule, and set it as an example to his troops. He devoted all his energies henceforth to one great object—to found a Moslem empire strong enough to drive the infidels out of the land 'When God gave me the land of Egypt,' said he, 'I was sure that He meant Palestine for me also' It may well be that natural selfish ambition quickened his zeal, but the result was the same. thenceforward his career was one long championship of Islam He had vowed himself to the Holy War"[2]

Zeal for Jehad:

The constant aim of his efforts was to fight in the way of God. Describing the zeal of Salah ud-din for *Jehād*, writes Ibn Shaddād:

> "Fired with the zeal to wage war against the Crusaders, *Jehād* was the most favourite topic of his discussion, he was always seen making his dispositions for the strengthening of his forces, seeking out men and materials for the same purpose and paying attention to anyone who spoke about these matters to him He had gladly abandoned for its sake his hearth and home, family and children, and betaken to the life of the camp where a wind could uproot his tent. Anybody encouraging him in his ambitions could easily win his confidence"[3]

1. *Al-Nawadir-i-Sultania*, pp 32-33
2. *Saladin*, p 99.
3. *Al-Nawadir-i-Sultania*, p, 17

"One could make a solemn affirmation that after he started the war against the Crusaders he never spent a single shell on anything save on the preparation for war and helping his men"[1]

Ibn Shaddād continues

"The Sultan appeared to be like a bereaved mother on the battle-field, who had been deprived of her only child by the cruel hands of Death He could be seen trotting on his horse from one end of the battle-field to another, exhorting the people to fight for the sake of Allah He would himself go round all the detachments, with tears in his eyes, asking people to come forth for the aid of Islam"[2]

The same writer describes how Salah ud-dīn spent his days during the siege of Acre.

"Excepting a sweet-drink for which his physician insisted, the Sultan did not take anything for the whole day[3]

"The royal physician told me that the Sultan had taken only a few morsels of food from Friday to Sunday as he was unable to pay attention to anything save the happenings on the battle-field"[4]

Battle of Hittīn:

After a series of fights and forays a hotly-contested battle was fought in the neighbourhood of Tiberias beneath the hills of Hittīn,[5] on Saturday, the 24th of Rabi ul-Akhir, 583 A H, which gave a death-blow to the power of the Crusaders The victory achieved by the Sultan has been described thus by Lane-Poole

"The flower of chivalry was taken The king and his brother, Reginald of Chatillon, Joscelin of Courtenay,

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1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 16

2 *Ibid*, p 155

3 *Ibid*, p 155

4 *Ibid*, p 90

5 Hittīn is the place named by tradition as the scene of Christ's sermon on the mount

Humphrey of Toron, the Masters of the Temple and Hospital, and many other nobles were among the prisoners.... The rest of the chivalry of Palestine was under Moslem warders Of the rank and file, all who were alive were made prisoners A single Saracen was seen dragging some thirty Christians he had himself taken, tied together with a tent-rope. The dead lay in heaps, like stones upon stones, among broken crosses, severed hands and feet, whilst mutilated heads strewed the ground like a plentiful crop of melons[1]

"The field long bore the marks of the bloody fight where '30,000' Christians were said to have fallen. A year afterwards the heaps of bleaching bones could be seen from afar, and the hills and valleys were strewn with the relics of the horrid orgies of wild beasts"[2]

Religious Ardour of the Sultan:

The fateful fight at Hittin came to a close with an incident which is symptomatic of Sultan Salah ud-din's fiery zeal for the religion This is how Lane-Poole describes it.

> "Saladin camped on the field of battle. When his tent was pitched, he ordered the prisoners to be brought before him. The King of Jerusalem and Reginald of Chatillon he received in his tent; he seated the King near himself, and seeing his thirst, he gave him a cup of water iced in snow. Guy drank and passed the cup to the lord of Karak: but Saladin was visibly annoyed. 'Tell the king,' he said to the interpreter, 'that it was he, not I, that gave that man drink' The protection of 'bread and salt' was not to baulk his vengeance. Then he rose and confronted Reginald, who was still standing: 'Twice have I sworn to kill him; once when he sought to invade the holy cities, and

1. *Saladin*, p 214
2. *Ibid*, p. 215

again when he took the caravan by treachery.[1] Lo! I will avenge Mohammed upon thee!" And he drew his sword and cut him down with his own hand, as he had sworn. The guard finished it and dragged the body out of the tent; and God sped his soul to Hell.

"The King, trembling at the sight, believed his own turn was now coming, but Saladin reassured him: 'It is not the custom of kings to slay kings; but that man had transgressed all bounds, so what happened, happened.'"[2]

Ibn Shaddād's version of Reginald of Chatillon's execution adds that Salah ud-dīn offered him the choice of Islam and on his refusal cut off his head. The Sultan said: "Lo! I avenge Muhammad, (peace and blessings of God be upon him) upon thee."[3]

Conquest of Jerusalem:

The victory at Hittīn was but the prelude to the much coveted conquest of Jerusalem by Salah ud-dīn. The intense desire of Salah ud-dīn for regaining the holy city has been starkly depicted by Ibn Shaddād who says that "the Sultan was so keen for Jerusalem that the hills would have shrunk from bearing the burden he carried in his heart."[4]

On Friday, the 27th of Rajab. 583 A.H., the day of the Prophet's Ascension,[5] when he had led the congregational prayer of

1 Ibn Shaddād adds that when the caravan of pilgrims was treacherously waylaid by Reginald, some of his captives implored him to be merciful. Reginald, however, arrogantly turned down their request saying: "Ask your Prophet Muhammad to come to your rescue". When Salah ud-dīn heard of it he vowed that he would slay Reginald with his own hands, if he got hold of him.

2 *Saladin*, pp. 214-215

3 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p. 64

4. *Ibid.*, p. 213

5. The miraculous event of the journey of Holy Prophet to Heaven has been alluded to in the Qur'ān (XVII : 1) which runs as follows: "Glorified be He who carried His servant by night from the Inviolable Place of Worship (Ka'aba) to the Far Distant Place of Worship (the Temple of Jerusalem) the neighbourhood where of We have blessed, that We might show him of

"If the taking of Jerusalem were the only fact known about Saladin, it were enough to prove him the most chivalrous and great-hearted conqueror of his own, and perhaps of any, age "[1]

The Third Crusade:

The fall of Jerusalem and the terrible rout of the Crusaders at the battle of Hittin threw the whole of Christendom into a violent commotion Reinforcements from Europe poured forth into Palestine Almost all the principal sovereigns and eminent generals of the then Christendom, such as, Frederick Barbarossa, the Emperor of Germany, Richard Cœr de Lion, King of England, and Philip Augustus, King of France, Leopold of Austria, the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Flanders sallied forth with their armies against the lonely Sultan and his few chiefs and relatives who had to defend the honour of Islam

Negotiations of Peace:

Both the parties which had been arrayed against each other in a sanguinary combat for five years at last got tired of the fruitless, harassing and decimating struggle. They came to an agreement at Ramla in 588 A H which recognised Salah ud-din as the sovereign of the whole of Palestine leaving the principality of Acre in the hands of the Christians Thus ended the Third Crusade and with it the task entrusted to Salah ud-din by God Lane-Poole describes the inglorious end of the Third Crusade in these words

> "The Holy War was over, the five years' contest ended Before the great victory at Hittin in July, 1187, not an inch of Palestine west of the Jordan was in the Moslems' hands After the Peace of Ramla in September, 1192, the whole land was theirs, except a narrow strip of coast from Tyre to Jaffa Saladin had no cause to be ashamed of the treaty. The Franks indeed retained most

1 *Saladin*, pp 233-234

of what the Crusaders had won, but the result was contemptible in relation to the cost At the Pope's appeal, all Christendom had risen in arms The Emperor, the Kings of England, France, and Sicily, Leopold of Austria, the Duke of Burgundy, the Count of Flanders, hundreds of famous barons and knights of all nations, had joined with the King and Princes of Palestine and the indomitable brothers of the Temple and Hospital, in the effort to deliver the Holy City and restore the vanished kingdom of Jerusalem The Emperor was dead the Kings had gone back, many of their noblest followers lay buried in the Holy Land, but Jerusalem was still the city of Saladin, and its titular king reigned over a slender realm at Acre

"All the strength of Christendom concentrated in the Third Crusade had not shaken Saladin's power His soldiers may have murmured at their long months of hard and perilous service, year after year, but they never refused to come to his summons and lay down their lives in his cause His vassals in the distant valleys of the Tigris may have groaned at his constant requirements, but they brought their retainers loyally to his colours, and at the last pitched battle, at Arsuf, it was the division of Mosul that most distinguished itself for valour Throughout these toilsome compaigns Saladin could always count on the support of the levies from Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well as from northern and central Syria; Kurds Turkmans, Arabs, and Egyptians, they were all Moslems and his servants when he called In spite of their differences of race. their national jealousies, and tribal pride, he had kept them together as one host—not without difficulty and twice or thrice a critical waver But, the shrinking at Jaffa notwithstanding, they were still a united army under his orders in the autumn of 1192, as they had been when he first led them 'on the Path of God' in 1187. Not a province had fallen away, not a chief or vassal had rebelled, though the calls upon their loyalty and endurance were

the earlier prophets in Jerusalem, the Sultan entered the city

Ibn Shaddād has given a graphic account of this memorable day He writes

> "It was the victory of victories A large crowd consisting of scholars and the nobles, traders and the laity had gathered on this joyous occasion A number of people had come from the coastal lands on getting the news of the Sultan's victory, and so had come nearly all the notable theologians from Egypt and Syria to congratulate him on his victory Hardly any dignitary or any noteworthy personage of the empire was left behind The joyful shouts of 'God is Great', and 'There is no god but God' rent the skies After ninety years Friday prayer was again held in Jerusalem The Cross that glittered on the Dome of the Rock was pulled down An undescribable event as it was, the blessings and the succour of God were to be witnessed every-where on the day "[1]

A costly pulpit which had been designed under the orders of Nūr ud-dīn Zangi twenty years ago was brought from Aleppo and erected in the Dome of the Rock [2]

Benevolence of Salah ud-dīn

The forbearance, humanity and magnanimity of Salah ud-dīn on this occasion was in striking contrast with the brutality of his Christian foes The Christian biographer of Salah ud-dīn, Lane-Poole, acknowledges that the Sultan's kindness of heart had conquered his desire for revenge He writes.

> "Never did Saladin show himself greater than during this memorable surrender His guards, commanded by

Our tokens!" The Prophet was brought by the angel Gabrial to the Temple of Jerusalem where he offered the prayers, leading a congregation of all the prophets who had come before him. Thereafter, he was taken to the Heaven to be presented before God Almighty

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 66

2 Abul Fida, Vol III p 77

> responsible emirs, kept order in every street, and prevented violence and insult, insomuch that no ill-usage of the Christians was ever heard of. Every exit was in his hands, and a trustee Lord was set over David's gate to receive the ransoms as each citizen came forth."[1]

Then, after describing how the people left in the holy city were ransomed and how al-Malik al-ᶜAdil, the brother of the Sultan, the Patriarch and Balian of Ibelin, were each allowed to set free a thousand slaves given by Salah ud-dīn, Lane-Poole writes:

> "Then said Saladin to his officers: 'My brother has made his alms, and the Patriarch and Balian have made theirs, now I would fain make mine.' And he ordered his Guards to proclaim throughout the streets of Jerusalem that all the old people who could not pay were free to go forth. And they came forth from the postern of St. Lazarus, and their going lasted from the rising of the sun until night fell. Such was the charity which Saladin did, of poor people without number."[2]

> "Thus did the Saracens show mercy to the fallen city. One recalls the savage conquest by the first Crusaders in 1099, when Godfrey and Tancred rode through streets choked with the dead and dying, when defenceless Moslems were tortured, burnt, and shot down in cold blood on the towers and roof of the Temple, when the blood of wanton massacre defiled the honour of Christendom and stained the scene where once the gospel of love and mercy had been preached. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' was a forgotten beatitude when the Christians made shambles of the Holy City. Fortunate were the merciless, for they obtained mercy at the hands of the Moslem Sultan.
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> *"The greatest attribute of heaven is Mercy,*
> *And 't is the crown of justice, and the glory*
> *Where it may kill with right, to save with pity.*

1 *Saladin*, p. 230

2 *Ibid.*, p. 232

defray his burial expenses and it had to be met by obtaining a loan in his name, while the shroud was provided by his minister and amanuensis, Cadi Fādhil

The Saintly Sultan

In regard to the character and disposition of Salah ud-dīn, Ibn Shaddād has left the following record.

"In faith and practice the Sultan was a devout Musalman, ever conforming to the tenets of the orthodox school of faith He was regular in the performance of religious observances Once he told me. 'I have not performed a single congregational prayer alone for the past several years' Even during his illness he would send for the *Imām* and force himself to perform the prayer behind him Assiduous in offering the prayers founded on the practice of the Prophet, he also performed the voluntary prayers during the night If he could not somehow offer these supererogatory prayers during the night, he made up for these before the dawn prayers as allowed by the Shafe'ite school I have seen him standing behind the *Imām* during his last illness and except for the three days when he had fallen into a stupor, he never missed his prayers The poor-due could never become incumbent upon him since he never possessed, throughout his life, property of such estate and effects as was necessary to make him liable to pay that tax Boundless in generosity, he gave away whatever he possessed to the poor and needy, and, at the time of his death, no more than forty-seven *dirhams* of silver and one of gold were found in his possession He left no other property or goods

"He always kept the fast during the month of Ramadhan He had had to omit the fast once which he got noted down by Cadi Fādhil Before his last illness he scrupulously made up for this involuntary omission against the advice of his physician. 'I do not know when death will overtake me,' said he; and, true to his words, he gave up the ghost soon

after the repayment of that omission The Sultan ardently desired to accomplish the pilgrimage to Mecca but he could never get time to fulfil his desire During the year he died he had an intense desire to set-out for the pilgrimage but he could not somehow leave for it

"He delighted in hearing the Qur'ān recited to him and it was not unoften that he listened three or four chapters of the Holy Scripture from the battlement guards whom he sometimes visited during the night He listened the Qur'ān with all his heart and soul till tears trickled down his cheeks He had also a fancy for listening to the sacred Traditions He would ask everybody present to sit down and listen calmly while the Traditions were read out to him If any reputed Traditionist visited the town, he would himself go to attend his lecture, sometimes he would himself relate a Tradition, his eyes brimming with tears He would sometimes pause on the field of battle, between approaching armies, to listen the Traditions read out to him He held the tenets of faith so reverently that it was on his command that a heretical mystic, es-Suhrawardy, was got executed by his son al-Malik al-Zāhir

"The Sultan had an unflinching trust and confidence in the beneficence of Allah He used to turn with his heart and soul towards God in the moments of difficulty Once Sultan was present within Jerusalem which then lay almost helpless before the besieging Crusaders The Sultan had, however, refused our request to leave the city It was a cold wintry night before Friday when I was alone with the Sultan, we spent the whole night in prayers and supplication I requested the Sultan, late after mid-night to take a little rest but he replied 'I think you want to sleep Go and take a nap' After a short while when I went to him for dawn prayers, which we more often performed together, I found him washing his hands 'I didn't sleep at all,' said he After the prayer was over, I said, 'I have had an idea which may be of benefit to us. You should address

enough to try the firmest faith and tax the strength of giants The brief defection, quickly pardoned, of a young prince of his own blood in Mesopotamia only emphasises, by its isolation, Saladin's compelling influence over his subjects When the trials and sufferings of the five years' war were over, he still reigned unchallenged from the mountains of Kurdistan to the Libyan desert, and far beyond these borders the king of Georgia, the Catholicos of Armenia, the Sultan of Konia, the Emperor of Constantinople, were eager to call him friend and ally .

"To such allies he owed nothing · they came not to aid but to congratulate The struggle was waged by Saladin alone Except at the last, when his brother came prominently to the front, one cannot point to a single general or counsellor who can be said to have led, much less dominated, the Sultan A council of war undoubtedly guided his military decisions, and sometimes overruled his better judgement, as before Tyre and Acre, but in that council it is impossible to single out a special voice that weighed more than another in influencing his mind Brother, sons, nephews, old comrades, new vassals, shrewd Kady, cautious secretary, fanatical preacher,—all had their share in the general verdict, all helped their Master loyally according to their ability, but not a man of them ever forgot who was the Master In all that anxious, laborious, critical time, one mind, one will was supreme, the mind and the will of Saladin "[1]

Death of Salah ud-dīn

On Wednesday, the 27th of Safar, 589 A H died Salah ud-din, the faithful ally of Islam, after working his way up to the summit of his ambition, in the fifty-seventh year of his age[2] Thus describes

1 *Saladin*, pp 358-360

2 Abul Fida', Vol III, p 90

Ibn Shaddād the last days of Sultan Salah ud-din·

"It was in the night of the 27th of Safar, and the twelfth day since he fell ill, that the Sultan's illness took a serious turn He had become too weak by then Sheikh Abū Ja^c^far, a pious and saintly person, was requested to stay within the castle during the night so that if the Sultan were to breathe his last, he might be available for recitation of the Qur'ān at the last moment It appeared as if the time of Sultan's eternal rest was drawing near Sheikh Abū Ja^c^far was sitting by his bed-side, reciting the Holy Qur'ān while the Sultan lay unconscious for the last three days, regaining his consciousness only for brief intervals in-between When Sheikh Abū Ja^c^far recited the verse *He is Allah than Whom there is no other God, the Knower of Invisible and the Visible*.[1] the Sultan opened his eyes and smiled, his face lighted up and he said joyfully, 'Verily, this is correct' No sooner had he uttered these words that his soul departed It was before dawn on Wednesday. the 27th of Safar when the Sultan passed away The day of his death was, for the Musalmans, a misfortune such as they had never suffered since they were deprived of the first four Caliphs The fort, the city and the entire world appeared to be lamenting over his death Whenever I was told earlier that sometimes people longed for offering their own lives for others, I thought it was just a figurative expression, but, I learnt, on the day the Sultan died, that it could really happen so I was one of those who would have then gladly parted with their lives if there had been the slightest possibility of saving the life of the Sultan by our sacrifice"[2]

Ibn Shaddād writes that the Sultan left nothing except one *dinar* and forty-seven *dirhams* when he died, nothing else did he leave by way of houses, or goods, or villages, or gardens, or any personal property[3] He had not left even as much that could suffice to

1. *Al-Hashr*, 22
2. *Il-Nawādir-i-Sultania* pp 249-250
3. *Ibid*, p 6 and *Saladin*, p 375

would have given away the last shell[1] The Sultan once cynically remarked that there were certain people for whom money and dust were alike "I know," says Ibn Shaddad, "that he was indirectly referring to his own views in this regard"[2]

The Sultan never allowed his visitor, even if he was a pagan, to leave him without a gift or some mark of recognition.[3] The ruler of Saida once paid a visit to the Sultan whom he welcomed with open arms The Sultan not only entertained him but also explained the tenets of Islam to him He regularly sent ice and fruits to Richard, his greatest foe, during the illness of the latter[4]

He was of so noble disposition and kind of heart that he could not see anyone in distress without being moved Once an old Christian woman came to him seeking her baby The old woman, screaming and in flood of tears, told the Sultan that her baby had been taken away from her tent by the dacoits She had been told, the woman said, that only he could help her to get her child back Touched by her lamentation the Sultan broke into tears and asked his men to find out from the slave market where her baby was After a short while her baby was brought back and the woman departed praying for the welfare of the Sultan[5]

Ibn Shaddad relates that the Sultan was very kind to the orphans Whenever he found such a child he entrusted him to someone or himself made arrangements for his up-bringing Similarly he was always grief-striken to see the aged and infirm whom he considered to be his special charge[6]

Courage and Fortitude

During the siege of Acre, tells Ibn Shaddad, the Sultan had been overtaken by a painful illness which made it difficult for him

1 *Al-Nawadir-i-Sultania* p 13
2 *Ibid*, pp 13-14
3 *Ibid*, p 24
4 *Saladin*, p 355
5 *Al-Nawadir-i-Sultania* p 26
6 *Ibid* p 28 and *Saladin*, p 372

yourself to God Almighty and beseech Him for help' He asked, 'What should I do for that?' 'Today 't is Friday,' said I, 'You should take bath before leaving for the ᶜAqsa Mosque and also make some offerings secretly by way of charity When you reach the mosque, offer a special prayer of two *rakᶜats* between the Call and congregational prayers, at the place where the Prophet had offered prayers during the Ascension I have read in a Tradition that the supplications made at that time are favoured with acceptance You should thereafter beseech God thus O my Lord, having lost all resources, I turn to Thee for help I now submit to Thee, for, Thou alone can help Thy faith to attain success at this critical juncture I hope that God shall accept your supplications' The Sultan did likewise I was by his side when I saw his head touching the ground in prostration and tears trickling down his beard on the prayer carpet I did not hear what was he beseeching unto the Lord but I witnessed the signs of his prayer being answered before the day was over Dissensions overtook the enemy camp from where we got heartening news for the next few days, till they broke their camp for Ramla by Monday morning."[1]

Character of Salah ud-dīn

A devout Muslim as he was, the dominant notes of his character were an acute sense of justice, charitableness, tender-heartedness, patience and courageousness

Ibn Shaddād writes that he held courts twice a week on each Monday and Tuesday, which were attended by the chiefs of state, scholars, jurists and Cadis. Great and small, everyone found the door open He used to read all the petitions and himself sign the orders dictated by him He never allowed anyone to leave him without meeting his requirement. At the same time he also kept himself busy in the recollection of God.

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, Abridged from pp 5-10

If anybody had any complaint to make, he would listen to him patiently and give his judgment Once a man lodged a complaint against Taqi ud-dIn, the Sultan's nephew, who was immediately summoned to the court for answering the charges On another occasion a man brought a suit against the Sultan himself who immediately made necessary investigations Although the claim of the person presenting the suit was not established, the Sultan granted him a robe of honour and a handsome grant before allowing him to leave the court

Kind and noble of heart, Salah ud-dIn was full of gentleness, patience and tenderness, and could never tolerate any injustice He always overlooked the mistakes of his associates and servants; if anything unpleasant was heard by him, he never allowed his annoyance to be betrayed to the person concerned Salah ud-dIn once asked for water which was somehow not procured for him He reminded five times for it and then said "I am dying of thirst" He drank the water which was brought thereafter without saying anything more[1] Another time when he wanted to take bath after a prolonged illness, he found the water too hot He asked for some cold water to be brought in The servant twice splashed the Sultan with cold water which caused him unpleasantness owing to his weakness but he simply said to the servant, "Tell me, if you want to get rid of me" The servant apologised and the Sultan instantly forgave him. Ibn Shaddād has narrated a number of other incidents exhibiting Salah ud-dIn's charity and goodness of heart

So generous and open-handed was he that sometimes he gave away the provinces conquered by him After he had conquered Āmad, one of his generals Qurrah Arslan expressed a desire for the city and the Sultan granted it to him[2] Sometimes he sold even his personal estates and effects for presenting a gift to his visitor The treasurers of the Sultan always used to keep a secret balance for the emergencies, for, left to himself, the Sultan

1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 21
2 *Ibid*, p 13

in 372 A H A man who was found in possession of the *Muwatta*[1] of Imām Mālik was punished.

"In 393 A H thirteen persons were punished for performing *Salat ul-Zuha*. Two vegetables, that is, water-cress and marsh-mellow were prohibited in 395 A. H. because Caliph Muawiyah and Ayeshah (the wife of the Prophet) were reported to have been fond of these. During the same year, curses and imprecations (upon the first three Caliphs and the Ummayyads), were ordered to be displayed prominently on the walls of all mosques, shrines and other public buildings. Wine was made lawful in 411 A H. by the Fatimide Caliph al-Zāhir l' Ayzaz Din-Illāh. On the one hand, tumultuous scenes of extravagant luxury, debauchery and drunkenness had become a common sight; on the other, famine and disease were working havoc among the lesser folk During this period of the cruelest suffering people used to gather round the Royal castle and cry 'Hunger, Hunger'. The callous indifference of the rulers, at last, gave rise to pillage and plunder.

"In 424 A H when the heir-apparent to the Fatimide throne, who was then only four years of age, drove through the well-decorated bazars of the Capital, people prostrated themselves before him

"It had become almost a rule among the Fatimides to raise the children of tender age to the throne of Caliphate Mustansir b'Illah was of only seven years when he ascended the throne, Āmir b' Ahkam-Illāh of five years, one month and a few days, Alfayez b'Nasr-Illāh of five years and ʿAzid l' Din-Illāh of 11 years at the time of their being vested with the office of Caliphate."[2]

Rise of Salah ud-din to power in Egypt marks the beginning of an era when Shiaʿite creed began to vanish with the restoration

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1 A collection of Traditions by Imām Mālik ibn Anas, the founder of one of the four juristic schools of Sunnīs

2 *Al-Maqrīzī*, Abbreviated from pp 352-359

of the spiritual authority of the orthodox Islam Schools were established in numerous places for the instruction of the masses Gradually all traces of heretical beliefs and practices which had been adopted by the people during the Fatimide rule of about three hundred years were effaced from Egypt The annalist of Egypt, al-Maqrizi, writes

> "The Shi'ah, Isma'iliyah and Imamiyah creeds became so extinct that they have left no trace in the whole of Egypt"[2]

The Fatimide rule in Egypt was indeed a scourge for Islam During the three hundred years of its supremacy it continued to play a cruel joke with the tenets and doctrines, performances and practices enjoined by the Scripture and Traditions The orthodox school was looked down upon and its followers were persecuted, while the dissenters, sceptics and non-conformists preaching licentiousness and libertine conduct were elevated to the positions of power and authority Al-Maqdisi has summed up the achievements of the Fatimide rule in these words.

> "It was an affliction that Islam had to endure during the entire period of the 'Obaidite (Fatimide) rule It began in 299 A H and came to an end in 567 A H Shi'ahs came to have a dominant position under them, oppressive imposts and taxes were levied upon the people, the Shi'ahs, particularly those belonging to the Ismailiyah sect, had a corrupting influence on the beliefs and faith of the simple and impressionable people belonging to the hilly tracts of Syrian border as also of Nusayris and Daruziz tribes The Hashashim (or the hashish-eaters) were also one of the Isma'ilite sects The Isma'ilite preachers were successful among the above-mentioned tribes of the border areas owing to their ignorance and naivety, but they could not gain influence among other people It was during their reign that the Franks captured many Muslim cities in Syria and northern Iraq Their onslaught continued till the Atabeks

2 *Al-Maqrizi*, p 359

grace of God, he came out victorious killing quite a large number and taking as many prisoners[1] During the siege of Acre more than seventy enemy ship-loads of fighting men and munitions of war landed during an afternoon Everyone present on the occasion was perturbed except the Sultan In one of the most hotly-contested battles during this period, a fierce charge by the enemy threw back the Muslim troops into disorder The enemy rammaged the Muslim camp and even got into Salah ud-din's tent, pulling down the Royal banner, but Salah ud-din stood firm along with a few of his comrades and was quickly able to muster his soldiery to back him, turning the defeat into victory The enemy suffered a heavy and murderous defeat and withdrew leaving seven thousand of the dead on the battle-field[2] Ibn Shaddād relates how ambitious Salah ud-din was Once the Sultan said to him, "I shall tell you what is my heart's desire When God shall have put into my hands the whole of the Holy Land, I shall share my states with my children, leave them my last instructions, and bidding them farewell, embark upon the sea to subdue the western isles and lands I shall never lay down my arms while there remains a single infidel upon earth, at least if I am not stopped by death"[3]

Salah ud-dīn—A Scholar

Salah ud-din had a good grounding in the religious lore He was aware of not only all the Arab tribes and their genealogy but even the pedigree of famous Arab horses, which testifies to his wide knowledge of the history of Arabs. He was always keen of gathering information from his courtiers and associates[4] It has been reported by certain historians that he had also committed the *Hamasa*[5] to memory[5]

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1 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 15
2 *Ibid*, pp 15-16
3 *Ibid*, p 17
4 *Ibid*, p 27
7 A collection of Arabic poetry
6 *Al-Nawādir-i-Sultania*, p 27

Writing about the youthful days of Salah ud-din, Lane-Poole says

> "To judge by later years, his literary tastes tended to the theological, he loved poetry indeed, but less than keen dialectic, and to hear holy traditions traced and verified, canon law formulated, passages in the Koran explained, and sound orthodoxy vindicated, inspired him with a strange delight "[1]

Collapse of Fatimides

Rise of Salah ud-udin signalled the fall of Fatimide[2] power which had established a separate Caliphate in Egypt It lasted for 266 years from 299 A H to 567 A H The Fatimides had introduced strange cults in the Islamic faith and practice changing its tenets and doctrines, rules of conduct and behaviour out of recognition A reputed historian al-Maqrizi has given a few examples of the orders promulgated by the Fatimides in his book *al-Khutat wal Athār* He writes

> "In 362 A H the law of inheritance was amended If a person left behind him a daughter along with a son or a nephew, or the uncle, the daughter excluded all others from succession Any violation of this law was treated as an evidence of enmity with Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet Visibility of the new moon for the beginning of a new month no longer remained necessary as the *Ramadhan* and *'Id* were ordered to be observed in accordance with the officially computed calendar
>
> *Tarawīh* was banned throughout Egypt by a Royal edict

1 *Saladin*, pp 73-74

2 The Fatimides claimed their descent from Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet but the historians are unanimous that they were not descendants of the Prophet The progenitor of the sect was either a converted Jew or Magian Cadi Abū Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Tayyab, Cadi 'Abdul Jabbar and al-Muqdisī have discussed the question in greater detail and reached the conclusion that the Fatimides were not in the lineage of the Prophet

came into power and a defender of Islam, as Salah ud-din was, came forward to crush their power. He regained the Islamic territories and saved the bondsmen of God from the Fatimide scourge."[1]

The revolutionary change brought about by Salah ud-din in Egypt was a harbinger of great religious and moral revival and, therefore, it is only natural that the historians of that period have expressed satisfaction over it Al-Maqdisi had himself witnessed the traces of a revolution that had transformed Egypt only 29 years before his birth The collapse of Fatimide rule finds expression in these words of al-Maqdisi:

> "Their kingdom collapsed and with it ended the age of degradation for Islam "[2]

Another scholar of repute, Hafiz ibn Qayyim, has given an impressive account of the rise of the Batinites and their downfall at the hands of Nur ud-din Zangi and Salah ud-din in his book *al-Sawayiq al-Mursalah.* He says:

> "The teachings of the Batinites died a natural death in the East but it began gradually to gain ground in the West until it became a force, deeply entrenched, to be reckoned with They assumed the charge of a few cities in North Africa, from where they advanced to Egypt and succeeded in taking possession of that country They founded al-Kahira (modern Cairo) Their missionaries continued to enlist adherents and diffuse their esoteric cult It is they who produced the *Tracts of the Brethren of Purity.* Ibn Sina (Avicenna) wrote the *Isharat* and the *Shifa'* and certain other tracts under their influence, for he has himself acknowledged that his father was one of the missionaries of the Fatimide Caliph Hakim b'Illah During the reign of the Fatimides the path of the Prophet became an impious blasphemy, the collections of the Traditions were proscribed and only a few remained who read these books or secretly

1. Al-Maqdisi, Vol I, p 201.
2 *Ibid*, Vol I p. 200.

acted on these precepts A dominant note of their teachings was that reason should be given precedence over revelation and the guidance of the apostles of God

"Gradually a greater part of the territories in North Africa, Egypt, Syria and Hijaz submitted to the Fatimide rule. Iraq also remained under their sway for about a year. *Sunnis* were treated like *Zimmis* under their rule; the Jews and the Christians at least enjoyed the security of life and property unknown to the *Sunnis* Innumerable religious scholars were executed or expired in their dungeons

"At last God Almighty came to the rescue of the Muslims who were saved from the clutches of the Fatimides by Nūr ud-dīn and Salah ud-dīn Islam appeared to be at the verge of extinction in these countries but the revolution brought about by Salah ud-dīn granted a new lease of life to it Muslims were indeed overjoyed at this miraculous revivification of Islam at a time when people had begun to ask one another 'Who can now dare to defend the faith of God?' It was at such a moment that Allah enabled His bondsmen to get back Jerusalem from the Crusaders whom the defenders of Islam fought with indomitable courage and chivalry."[1]

The chronicles of the time show that the news of the fall of the Fatimide kingdom was generally received with a sense of relief and pleasure by the entire Islamic world and by the Muslims of Syria, in particular.[2]

Thus Salah ud-dīn stemmed the tide of the Crusaders which saved the world of Islam from the bondage and exploitation of western nations for centuries to come. On the other hand, he plugged a great source of evil by overthrowing the Fatimide Caliphate which was spreading the contamination of Batinite and Isma'ilite cults to other Muslim lands from its centre in Egypt The esoteric doctrines preached by these sects during the last two

1 Ibn Qayyim, Vol II, pp. 233-234

2 Al-Maqdisi, Vol I pp 198-199

or three centuries were responsible for the then prevailing intellectual waywardness and the degeneration of the faith and morals. The world of Islam cannot, indeed, forget either of these two achievements of Salah ud-din nor can any Muslim, living in any part of the world, ever fail to acknowledge his bebt of gratitute to Sultan Salah ud-din Ayyubi

CHAPTER XI

SHEIKH UL-ISLAM IZZ UD-DIN IBN ABDUL SALAM

The heroic endeavours of Salah ud-dīn who set himself to work in the most earnest fashion with the re-introduction of orthodox doctrines of Islam in place of the Shiaᶜite creed, the chain of educational institutions started for the purpose all over his wide realm and, above all, the personal example set by him and some of the Muslim rulers in following the religious precepts and code of moral conduct redirected the energies of the people towards learning and teaching of the religious sciences. As a result thereof, we find several erudite scholars during the seventh century, who had devoted themselves, body and soul, to the dissemination of Islamic teachings among their compatriots. The most outstanding personage among these savants was Sheikh ul-Islam ᶜIzz ud-dīn ibn ᶜAbdul Salām (d. 660 A. H.). Reputed for profound learning, piety and courage, he never compromised with the corrupting influences of his time and the degenerate ways of the then rulers

Erudition of ᶜIzz ud-dīn:

ᶜIzz ud-dīn ibn Abdul Salām was born in Damascus in 578 A. H. He had the honour of being a student of several eminent scholars of those days such as Fakhr ud-dīn ibn ᶜAsākir, Saif ud-dīn Amedi and Hafiz Abū Mohammad al-Qāsim According to certain annalists, he started education quite late but he soon acquired such a proficiency in the then sciences that his contemporaries have paid glowing tributes to his deep learning and brilliance of mind, Ibn Daqiq al-ᶜId calls him *Sultan ul-ᶜUlema* (king of scholars) in some of his works When ᶜIzz ud-dīn

migrated to Egypt in 639 A. H., Hafiz ᶜAbdul ᶜAzīm al-Munziri, the writer of *al-Targhīb wal-Tarhīb*, suspended giving legal-opinions When he was asked the reason for it, he said : "It does not behove any jurist to give legal-opinion where ᶜIzz ud-dīn happens to be present." Another scholar Sheikh Jamal ud-dīn ibn al-Hajib was of the opinion that in *Fiqah* (jurisprudence) ᶜIzz ud-dīn excelled even al-Ghazali,[1]

Al-Zahabi writes in his book entitled *al-ᶜEbar*

> "In his knowledge of *Fiqah*, devotion to religion and awe of God he had attained that degree of perfection which makes one capable of *Ijtihād* i e of interpreting the revealed law of God and of deducing new laws from it "[2]

ᶜIzz ud-dīn occupied the chair of professor for a fairly long period in the *Madarsa Zāwiyah Ghazāliyah* of Damascus along with holding the offices of *Khatīb* and *Imām* in the principal mosque of the city called the Ummayyad Mosque. Sheikh Shahāb ud-dīn Abū Shāma relates that ᶜIzz ud-dīn vehemently opposed the innovations and later-day accretions like *Salāt al-Raghāyeb*[3] and the special prayers of mid-Shᶜabān[4] which had become so popular in his time that several scholars of note thought it prudent to keep silence about these

Al-Malik al-Kāmil[5] insisted on ᶜIzz ud-dīn for accepting the office of Cadi in Damascus which he accepted reluctantly after imposing a number of conditions During the same period

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafeᶜiyah* Vol V, p 83
2. Al-Suyuti, Vol I, p 141
3. *Salat al-Raghāyeb* was a special prayer of 12 *Rakᶜats* performed in the night of the 27th Rajab. The people had somehow come to regard it as a highly meritorious prayer It came in vogue in 448 A H as described by ᶜIzz ud-dīn, *vide Itahaf us-Saᶜādah*, (Vol III, pp 423-424)
4. In the night of 15th Shābān a prayer of 100 Rakᶜats was performed in a manner specially prescribed for it Ibn Subki and Imām Nawavi, have held both these offerings to be detestable innovations (*Ithāf us-Saᶜādah*, Vol III, pp 425-427)
5. Son of Al-Malik al-ᶜAdil who held Egypt after the death of his father in 615 A. H

al-Malik al-Kāmil appointed him as his envoy to the court of the then ʿAbbāsid Caliph

Righteousness of ʿIzz ud-dīn:

Among the religious scholars of Syria, ʿIzz ud-dīn was held in such a high esteem that he was received by the then King with the most honourable marks of distinction On his own part, however, ʿIzz ud-dīn never visited the king unless he was requested to do so Being dignified, straight-forward and self-respecting he did not like to curry favour with the king; instead, he insisted always upon the king to follow the course beneficial for Islam and the Muslims

During his illness Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf who held the principality of Aleppo after the demise of his father, al-Malik al-ʿAdil, sent for ʿIzz ud-dīn Earlier the Sultan had had some misunderstandings[1] with the Sheikh on account of certain views held by the latter but the same were removed as a result of their meeting The Sultan requested the Sheikh to forgive him for his mistake and also to let him have a word of advise "So far as the request for pardon is concerned," replied ʿIzz ud-dīn, "I forgive everyone with whom I happen to be displeased, for, I never allow the sun to go down upon my animus against anybody Instead of seeking my recompense from the human beings, I desire it from God alone as the Lord has said · *But whosoever pardoneth and amendeth, his wage is the affair of Allah*[2] "As for my benedictions for you",

1 During the sixth and seventh centuries a controversy had arisen between the Hanbalites and Ashʿarites in regard to the attributes of God The former favoured a literal interpretation of the Scripture while the latter held the attributes of God to be distinct from his essence, yet in a way as to forbid any comparison being made between God and His creatures This difference later became a hotly-contested issue between the two groups who came to regard it as a criterion of the true faith ʿIzz ud-dīn, was a Ashʿarite while al-Malik al-Asharaf had a predisposition towards Hanbalite school which had caused a misunderstanding between the two *Tabqāt al-Shafiʿiyah*, Vol V, pp 85-95

2 *Ash-Shūra* 40

added ʿIzz ud-dīn, "I very often pray to God for the well-being of the Sultan, for this also means the welfare of Islam and the Muslims God may grant the Sultan insight and understanding of the matters which may be helpful to him in the life to come. Now, coming to the advice, it is my bounden duty to enjoin the right course since the Sultan has asked for it. I know that the Sultan is reputed for his valour and the brilliant victories he has won, but Tartars are making inroads into Islamic territories. They have been emboldened by the fact that the Sultan has pitched his aims against al-Malik al-Kāmil and thus he would not have time to face the enemies of God and the persecutors of Muslims. Al-Malik al-Kāmil is, however, the elder brother of the Sultan and, therefore, I would request the Sultan to give up the idea of fighting against his own brother, instead I would advise him to turn his forces against the enemies of Islam. The Sultan should make up his mind, in these critical days of his illness, to fight for the sake of God alone and for restoring the supremacy of His faith. We hope to overcome the infidels with the help of the Sultan, if God restores him his health This would verily be a great achievement but if God has willed otherwise, the Sultan would undoubtedly be recompensed for his intention to come to the rescue of Islam".

Al-Malik al-Ashraf thanked ʿIzz ud-dīn for his sincere advice and immediately issued orders redirecting his forces to face the Tartars instead of al-Malik al-Kāmil. As soon as the orders of the Sultan were communicated to the commander of his army, he retreated to Kasirah

On al-Malik al-Ashraf's further request to counsel him something more, ʿIzz ud-dīn said, "The Sultan is bedridden but his chiefs and officials are having rounds of pleasure, they are revelling in wine and wickedness while Muslims are being burdened with new taxes and tithes The most valuable presentation that the Sultan can offer to God is that this cesspool of corruption is cleansed; illegal imposts are abolished, tyranny is stopped and justice is made available to the people" Al-Malik al-Ashraf not only acted on the advice of ʿIzz ud-dīn but profusely thanked him saying, "May God give you a goodly reward for performing the

duty enjoined by the religion, on behalf of all the Muslims whose well-wisher you undoubtedly are Sire, allow me to be your companion in the Paradise." The Sultan also presented one thousand Egyptian gold mohurs to ʿIzz ud-dīn but he refused to accept them saying, "I met you only for the sake of God and I do not want any worldly temptation to be made an additional reason for it"

Courage of ʿIzz ud-dīn :

Al-Malik al-Ashraf was succeeded by Sāleh Ismāʿīl who sought help of the Christians against the impending danger of invasion from Egypt In lieu of the aid promised by the Christians the cities of Saida, Thakif and few other forts were ceded to them The friendly relations thus established by Sāleh Ismāʿīl encouraged the Christians to purchase arms and ammunition from the Muslim traders in Damascus ʿIzz ud-dīn deprecated these deals as the arms purchased by the Christians were likely to be used against the Muslims and, therefore, when the arms dealers asked for his legal-opinion in the matter, he advised that all such bargains were prohibited by the *Sharīʿah* This was not all, ʿIzz ud-dīn gave up benedictions for the King in the Friday sermons and started invoking the wrath of God on the enemies of Islam.[1] The matter was brought to the notice of the King who ordered to imprison him After some time he was transferred to Jerusalem from his Damascus gaol

In the meantime Sāleh Ismaʿīl along with his allies, al-Malik al-Mansūr, the King of Hams and a few Christian monarchs converged at Jerusalem with the intention of invading Egypt Although Sāleh Ismāʿīl had imprisoned ʿIzz ud-dīn, he was feeling guilty in his heart of heart and wanted to set him free provided ʿIzz ud-dīn was prepared to give him an excuse for the same He, therefore, gave his handkerchief to one of his trusted councillors with the instruction that he should present it to ʿIzz ud-dīn and tell him courteously that if he so desired, his previous position would be

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafiʿiyah*, Vol V, p. 80

restored The councillor was also directed to present ʿIzz ud-dīn before the King in case he agreed to the suggestion with the highest respect, otherwise to imprison him in a tent beside that of the King. The Councillor did what he had been commissioned, paid his compliments and related the admiration of the King for the Sheikh, and then said, "Everything will be set right and your previous position will be restored in no time, if you just kiss the hands of the king and show courtesy to him." History can perhaps offer few such striking examples of fearless expression, for, ʿIzz ud-dīn replied, "What a fool you are! You expect me to kiss the hands of the King while I would not like my own hands to be kissed by him My friend, you are living in a world other than that of mine Praise be to Allah that I am not a prey to the temptations which have captured your soul."[1] The Councillor then told him that in that case he had orders to imprison him again The Sheikh was accordingly placed under confinement in a tent beside the king's, who heard him daily reciting the Qurʾān The King one day told his Christian ally that the person whom he heard reciting the Qurʾān at the moment was the chief pontiff of Muslims but he had been divested of his post and honours and kept under confinement because of his opposition to the cession of cities and forts to the Christians The Christian monarch, however, replied that if he were to have such a man as his bishop, he would have felt honoured to sit at his feet[2]

Shortly thereafter Sāleh Ismāʿīl was defeated and killed in an encounter with the Egyptian forces, and ʿIzz ud-dīn was honourably taken to Egypt.

While on his way to Egypt ʿIzz ud-dīn passed through the principality of Kark When its Governor requested ʿIzz ud-dīn to settle in Kark, he replied, "This small city of yours is not befitting my learning"[3]

1 *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, p 101
2. *Ibid*, Vol V, p 101
3 *Ibid*, Vol V, p 81

ᶜIzz ud-dīn in Egypt

ᶜIzz ud-dīn was received by the then Sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Sāleh Najm ud-dīn Ayyūb, with great reverence and honour. He was appointed *Khatīb* of the Mosque of ᶜAmr ibn al-ᶜĀs as well as the grand Qadi of Egypt He was also entrusted with the task of looking after the rehabilitation of deserted mosques and the professorship of Shafeᶜi jurisprudence in Madarsa Salihiya founded by the King.

Fearlessness of ᶜIzz ud-dīn :

A man by the name of Fakhr ud-dīn ᶜUthmān who was an intendant of the palace had come to wield a great influence over the King This man got a drum-house constructed over the roof of a mosque. When ᶜIzz ud-dīn came to know of it, he ordered the structure of the drum-house to be pulled down [1] He declared Fakhr ud-dīn ᶜUthmān as an unreliable witness for the purposes of tendering evidence in a court of law and also resigned from the post of Chief Justice as a mark of protest against the blasphemous action of Fakhr ud-dīn ᶜUthmān ᶜIzz ud-dīn continued to enjoy the esteem of the king who, however, did not consider it prudent to appoint ᶜIzz ud-dīn as grand Qadi for the second time Notwithstanding this decision of the King, juristic-opinions tendered by ᶜIzz ud-dīn were acted upon with the same respect as before During this period al-Malik al-Sāleh Najm ud-dīn Ayyūb sent an embassy to the court of the Caliph in Baghdad When the Egyptian envoy was presented before the Caliph he enquired of the envoy if the Sultan of Egypt had himself commissioned him to convey the message On being told that he had been charged to convey the message by Fakhr ud-dīn ᶜUthmān on behalf of the Sultan, the Caliph replied that since Fakhr ud-dīn ᶜUthmān had been declared an unreliable witness by ᶜIzz ud-dīn, no credence could be placed on a message conveyed through him The envoy had to return to Egypt to obtain the orders of the Sultan afresh

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafeᶜiyah*, Vol V, p 81

There is yet another incident which bespeaks of ʿIzz ud-dīn's fearlessness The Sultan who was holding a durbar on the occasion of ʿId was seated on the throne in a large reception hall, with the princes and chiefs of the State ranged on his right, and the courtiers and dignitaries on the left In front of the Sultan stood all the people entitled to enter and salute the sovereign, when a voice was suddenly heard addressing the Sultan by his first name. "Ayyūb, what would be your reply before God when He would ask you whether the kingdom of Egypt was given to you so that people should openly indulge in drinking-bouts and you should enjoy public receptions?" "Is it," blurted out the Sultan who was taken aback, "is it a fact?" "Yes," came the reply from ʿIzz ud-dīn, "Wine is being freely sold and consumed in the city while people indulge in other vices too" Surprised as the Sultan was, he replied, "But 't is not my fault, Sire, for it has been happening from the time my father held the reigns of this kingdom". "Then, you are one of those," admonished ʿIzz ud-dīn, "who say that *we found our fathers acting on this wise*"[1] The Sultan immediately gave orders to stop the sale of wine in his realm.

While returning from the court one of the pupils of ʿIzz ud-dīn asked him why he had raised the question on that occasion. ʿIzz ud-dīn replied, "When I saw the Sultan surrounded by that pomp and show I thought that he might give himself airs and become a slave to his baser-self I, therefore, thought it necessary to admonish him publicly." "But were you not seized with fright," demanded the disciple further. "Oh no," replied ʿIzz ud-dīn, "I was so much seized by the awe and glory of God Almighty that the Sultan appeared to me as meek as a cat"[2]

ʿIzz ud-dīn in the Battlefield

These were the days when the dissensions among the Muslim monarchs had again created a situation favourable to the Crusaders who unsheathed their swords to take an offensive against

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1 *Ash-Shu'ara* 74

2 *Tabqāt al-Shafe'iyah*, Vol V, p 82

Mansurah in Egypt. ʿIzz ud-dīn accompanied the forces sent to retrieve the city from the Christians. A chronicler of the time, Ibn al-Subki, writes that ʿIzz ud-dīn's prayer for the success of Muslim forces was readily answered by God. The reinforcements of the Crusaders could not reach them as their ships were taken by a gale, which submerged quite a few of them[1]

The Mongols had also started raiding and plundering Muslim territories by then Once there was an imminent danger of Mongol invasion of Egypt but the Sultan and his commanders were so disheartened that they could not muster courage to face the Mongol hordes ʿIzz ud-dīn encouraged the Sultan to fight the Mongols. He even assured the Sultan of his success against the Mongols. At last the Sultan agreed to his suggestion but as he was facing paucity of funds he sought the advice of ʿIzz ud-dīn about raising the necessary finances through loans from the businessmen ʿIzz ud-dīn, however, advised "First bring the ornaments your women-folk and those of your dignitaries and nobles have in their possession. These are all prohibited by the *Sharīʿah* and should be used for meeting the expenses of this expedition. And, if you still need the money, then you can raise it through loans" Surprising though it may seem, the king and his nobles brought out without a demur all the jewellery and valuables they possessed as the Sheikh had directed The riches so brought forth was enough to meet the expenses of raising an adequate force to face the Mongols who were defeated by the Egyptian army as predicted by ʿIzz ud-dīn.

An still more surprising incident of the Sheikh's life described by the historians relates to his insistence upon auctioning those dignitaries of the Sultan's court whom he held to be the property of the State exchequer, since they happened to be slaves who had not been emancipated in accordance with the provisions of the *Sharīʿah* These chiefs of the State were recruited as royal levies from the Turkish *memluks* or slaves but had risen to the positions of authority and wielded great influence on the government of Egypt. One of

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafiʿiyah*, Vol V, p 84

them even held the post of a minister to the Sultan ʿIzz ud-dīn pronounced the juristic-opinion that these chiefs were still slaves in accordance with the rules of the *Sharīʿah*, and should be treated as such until they were formally emancipated. The population of Egypt immediately ceased cooperating with such chiefs and dignitaries who were placed in such an invidious position that they had to call upon the Sheikh and to enquire what he proposed to do with them. ʿIzz ud-dīn, however, told them plainly that he would sell them in a public auction on behalf of the State treasury and thereafter they would be emancipated as provided by the *Sharīʿah*. They appealed to the Sultan who also tried, as the annalists have recorded, to placate ʿIzz ud-dīn but he remained adamant. During the discussion on the subject the Sultan told ʿIzz ud-dīn that he should not concern himself with the affairs of the State and also said something, as it has been reported, which was taken ill by ʿIzz ud-dīn. The Sheikh returned to his house and announced his decision to leave Egypt immediately The news spread like a wild fire in Cairo, and an overwhelming majority of its population decided to follow ʿIzz ud-dīn and migrate with him The matter was brought to the notice of the Sultan who was also told that if ʿIzz ud-dīn went away from Egypt, his kingdom would also come to an end Extremely worried by the fastly deteriorating situation, the Sultan himself went to bring ʿIzz ud-dīn back to the city, who had by then left it with a large section of its inhabitants The Sultan had at length to give in to ʿIzz ud-dīn who was allowed to auction the chiefs The *memluk* minister, however, still tried to dissuade the Sheikh but, failing in his efforts, decided to slay ʿIzz ud-dīn. He went with his entourage, sword in hand, to the house of ʿIzz ud-dīn, and knocked at the door The son of ʿIzz ud-dīn, who came out to answer the call, went in and told his father what he had seen but the Sheikh calmly said, "My son, your father is not lucky enough to be slain in the way of God" ʿIzz ud-dīn came out without the slightest trace of fear on his face. As soon as the minister saw ʿIzz ud-dīn, he was overtaken by a flutter and the sword fell from his hand With tears in his eyes he again humbly repeated the question, "My lord, what do you

want to do with us." "I will auction you", was the Sheikh's reply. "And where will you spend the sale proceeds," the minister demanded again The Sheikh replied crisply, "On the welfare of Muslims". The minister asked again, "Who will collect the sale-price". ᶜIzz ud-dīn replied, "Myself". The minister at last agreed to be sold by the Sheikh who auctioned him along with other *memluks* As a mark of respect to the position held by these dignitaries, the Sheikh fixed a higher price for each and asked them to deposit the sale-price The money thus collected by ᶜIzz ud-dīn was spent on welfare projects while the chiefs were granted their warrant of emancipation The historian Ibn al-Subki writes: "Such an incident was never heard of earlier about anyone."[1] This is perhaps the only example of its kind recorded by history about the deference and veneration ever accorded to any scholar.

ᶜIzz ud-dīn and the Kings of Egypt:

Egypt witnessed quite a few political upheavals during ᶜIzz ud-dīn's stay in that country. When he arrived in Egypt, a monarch of Salah ud-dīn's dynasty, al-Malik al-Sāleh Najm ud-dīn Ayyūb was ruling over the country. He was succeeded by his son al-Malik al-Muᶜazzam Turan Shah after whom the Turkish Chiefs seized the reigns of government. They too held ᶜIzz ud-dīn in a high esteem while the celebrated Turk Sultan al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibers was especially devoted to the Sheikh. It was on the advice of ᶜIzz ud-dīn that Baibers invited Abul Qasim Ahmad, the uncle of the last Caliph Mustᶜasim b'Illāh who had escaped the massacre by Mongols, to Cairo in 659 A.H., and acknowledged him as Caliph under the title al-Mustansir b'Illāh The first to take the oath of allegiance was ᶜIzz ud-dīn, next came the Sultan Baibers followed by the Chief Cadi Taj ud-dīn, the principal Sheikhs and nobles[2]

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafiᶜiyah* Vol V, pp 84-85
1. Al-Suyūti, Vol. II, p 49

Moral Rectitude:

ʿIzz ud-dīn was as much celebrated for his generosity, kindness and humanity as for his profound knowledge and piety. The Chief Cadi Badr ud-dīn ibn Jamaʿah relates that when ʿIzz ud-dīn was still in Damascus, a slump in prices once overtook the market As the prices of groves had suffered a steep fall, the wife of ʿIzz ud-dīn gave him an ornament to purchase a grove so that they might spend the summer in it. ʿIzz ud-dīn sold the ornament and gave over the sale proceeds in charity. Later, when his wife asked if he had purchased the grove, ʿIzz ud-dīn replied, "Yes, but in the Paradise. I saw many poor people in great distress and so I spent the money on them" His wife thanked God for the good act of ʿIzz ud-dīn [1]

Cadi Badr ud-dīn has also written that ʿIzz ud-dīn gave as freely when he was poor as when he happened to be rich. If he had nothing to give to a beggar, he would part with a portion of his turban

ʿIzz ud-dīn was equally courageous and truthful against his own self as against the kings and nobles Ibn al-Subki and al-Suyūti write that once during his stay in Egypt ʿIzz ud-dīn made a certain mistake in the juristic-opinion given by him As soon as he came to know of his mistake, he got an announcement made that the people should not act on that opinion since it was wrong.[2]

Ibn al-Subki relates that ʿIzz ud-dīn had also been favoured with the inner enlightenment His fearlessness, disregard for worldly power, fame and riches and, above all, the unflinching faith and trust in God showed that he had attained the sublimeness of spirit As Ibn al-Subki records, ʿIzz ud-dīn was a disciple of the famous spiritual mentor, Sheikh Shahab ud-dīn Suharwardy who had authorised him to guide others in the mystic path [3] ʿIzz ud-dīn had also had the opportunity of meeting and

1. *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol. V pp 82-83
2. Al-Suyūti, Vol I, p 142 and *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, p 83
3. *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, p 83

remaining in the company of another reputed mystic, Sheikh Abul Hasan Sazli [1]

Righteousness :

ᶜIzz ud-dīn preached and acted on the Qur'ānic dictum commanding to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, no matter what dangers and hardships one might have to face for it.

In one of his letters addressed to the Sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf he wrote

> "What we claim is that we are partisans, friends and helpers or rather the troopers of Allah, and no one can lay a claim to be a combatant unless he is willing to expose himself to danger."[2]

In ᶜIzz ud-dīn's view the knowledge and eloquence of a scholar constituted his two weapons which should be fully utilized in the fight for righteousness In his another letter to the Sultan he wrote

> "God has enjoined upon us to strive and fight for His religion Just as you have your swords and lances for your arms, we have our knowledge and parlance, and as it does not befit you to sheathe your sword, similarly we cannot hold our tongue against the innovators and dissenters, apostates and sinners "[3]

ᶜIzz ud-dīn considered it imperative for the scholars to be ever willing to face dangers in the discharge of their sacred obligation and enjoin the right course, cost what may Thus, he vehemently disagreed with those religious scholars who did not consider it lawful to expose themselves to avoidable dangers His commentary on the Qur'ānic verse " . *and be not cast by your own hands to ruin*"[4] amply bears out his point of view in this regard :

> "To risk one's life for the honour and dominance of

1 Al-Suyūti, Vol I, p 142

2 *Tabqāt al-Shafiᶜiyah*, Vol V, p. 95.

3. *Ibid*, Vol V, p 90

4. *Al-Baqrah* : 195

the Faith is permitted by the *Shariah*, it is rather enjoined on all able-bodied persons to wage war in the way of God and fight the infidels So it is lawful to expose oneself to danger, under the provisions of the *Shariʿah,* for enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong However, if anyone feels that he might lose his life in the venture, the command loses its obligatory character for him but it nevertheless remains a commendable act Thus, they are definitely wrong who think that it is not lawful to risk one's life for the purpose In short, if anybody gives preference to his Self over God, He will give preference to others over him, if anybody seeks the pleasure of God at the cost of offending others, God will not only bless him but also make others to be pleased with him And if anybody, on the other hand, wants to gratify others by displeasing God, He will be displeased with him and also cause others to be disappointed with him"

"An Arab poet has rightly expressed the same idea in this verse

"I wont' care howsoever troublesome my life may be, if I were only to gain your love, may thou be pleased with me even if this annoys the whole world"[1]

ʿIzz ud-dīn lived up to his ideal and never hesitated to sacrifice his health or home, life or honour for what he believed to be the correct and righteous path enjoined by the *Shariʿah*

Writings of ʿIzz ud-dīn:

He was an erudite scholar, broad-minded jurist and a successful teacher In penmanship too, he was equally celebrated, his two most well-known works being *al-Qawaʾid al-Kubra* and *Kitāb Majāz al-Qurʾān* Ibn as-Subki writes about these books

"These books of ʿIzz ud-dīn mark him as an outstanding scholar of profound knowledge in religious sciences"[2]

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1 *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V p 91
2 *Ibid*, Vol V, p 103

ʿIzz ud-dīn later summarised both the above mentioned books Ibn al-Subki has also praised his two other books entitled *Shajaratul-Maʿārif* and *Ad-Dalāyel ul-Mutʿaliqah bil Malāykah wal-Ir*. In addition to these writings one more book of ʿIzz ud-dīn by the name of *Maqāsid us-Salāt* was widely read during his own lifetime Thousands of its copies were made out by the people[1] ʿIzz ud-dīn also left a voluminous collection of the juristic-opinions pronounced by him which is regarded as a valuable collection of legal precepts according to the Shafeʿite school of jurisprudence

ʿIzz ud-dīn was perhaps the next scholar after al-Ghazali in Islam who set forth to define and delineate the objectives of the religious observances and the benefits accruing from the performances enjoined by the *Shariʿah* In the introduction to his famous treatise *Hujjat Allah il-Bāligha*, Shah Wali Ullah Muhaddith of Delhi, the greatest authority on the subject, has acknowledged his debt to the three earlier masters viz al-Ghazali, Abū Sulaiman Khattābi and ʿIzz ud-dīn[2]

Death of ʿIzz ud-dīn

ʿIzz ud-dīn died in the eighty-third year of his age on the 9th of Jamadi al-Awwal, 660 A H Al-Malik al-Zāhir Baibers, the then king of Egypt, accompanied the funeral of the Sheikh along with the dignitaries and chiefs The King was very much aggrieved that the Sheikh's death was destined to occur during his reign

Witnessing the mammoth funeral procession passing by the side of the royal Castle the King said to one of his councillors "My kingdom would have been nowhere if this man had decided to oppose me He had verily won the hearts of the people"[3]

1 *Tabqāt al-Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, p 98

2 *Hujjat*, Vol I, p 6

3 *Tabqāt al Shafeʿiyah*, Vol V, p 84

CHAPTER XII

TARTARS—THE SCOURGE OF GOD

The Causes of Tartar Invasion

Islam was confronted with another danger in the seventh century, unparalled in the annals of the world, which was about to wipe it out of existence. This was the invasion of the wild and savage hordes of the Tartars who issued forth from the Mongolian steppes and over-powered almost the whole of the Islamic world with a lightning speed.

The immediate cause of the Mongol invasion can be attributed to a grevious mistake of ʿAla ud-dīn Muhammad, the Shah of Khwarism.[1] A body of traders who had arrived from Mongolia was put to death, and when Chengiz Khan deputed an embassy te enquire into the reasons for it, Muhammad replied by killing the envoy too. On receiving the news of this outrage upon international courtesy, the Mongol Khakan Chengiz Khan unloosened the whirlwind of savagery upon the world of Islam.

However, if one were to look into the moral behaviour and attitudes of ancient nations, particularly those relating to the Bani Israel as well as their destruction and massacre, demolition and sacrilege of Jerusalem, and the reasons therefor described in the Qur'ān,[2] one can clearly see with the insight provided by the Scripture into the nature of historical process, that the reason for converting the Islamic world into a vast charnel-house was not a

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1 Khwarism was the area south of Aral sea on the lower course of Āmū Darya (Oxus) which now forms part of Turkmanistan and Uzbekistan Republics of U. S. S. R.

2 One need look into the verses 4 to 7 of the Chapter *Bani Israel* in Qur'ān which brings out the religio-moral standpoint of the Scripture in regard to the downfall of the nations.

solitary act of cruelty on the part of a reckless and haughty sovereign As the Qur'ān tells us, it was certainly not due to the mistake of a single individual that the storm of death and destruction burst forth on the entire world of Islam If we were to cast a glance over the religious, moral, social and political conditions of the Muslim peoples in those days, there would be no difficulty in finding out the reason for this calamity Such a survey would amply bear out that the carnage did not take place all of a sudden. It had deeper and far-reaching reasons than those narrated hitherto by the historians We shall have to look for these reasons into the political situation and the social condition of Muslim society over a century or more prior to the Mongol invasion.

After the death of Salah ud-din in 589 A H, the vast empire carved out by him split up into several independent principalities and kingdoms headed by his sons or other successors Like many other founders of the Empires his successors did not possess the talent of their progenitor, and, what was more, they continued to fight each other for a fairly long time Some of these even did not hesitate to seek the assistance of the Crusaders against their own brethren, an instance of which has already been cited in the previous section The whole of Islamic world was, in fact, in a state of chaos, nowhere was to be found peace and tranquillity, a moral and social disintegration was at work which was clearly visible in the rapidly deteriorating political situation The Crusaders were again making inroads into the Muslim territories and had recaptured the lands emancipated from their clutches by Salah ud-din All those factors had already contributed to the repeated famines and epidemics. A fertile country like Egypt was so devastated by the fratricidal warfare between al-Malik al-ʿAdil and his nephew al-Malik al-Afzal that when the floods in Nile failed in 597 A H., the country was overtaken by such a severe famine[1] that the people had to take resort to cannibalism Death stalked over the land killing the people in such large numbers that the dead had to be buried without shrouds The annalist Abū Shāma

1. Ibn Kathīr, Vol XIII, p. 26

relates that Sultan al-Malik al-ʿAdil provided shrouds for two hundred and twenty thousand dead bodies in a single month People began to take the dogs' and human flesh without any feeling of revulsion, innumerable children were eaten away Ibn Kathir writes that a stage came when the children and youth of tender age were all eaten up and people began to kill one another to satisfy their hunger[1] These were grim reminders of God calling people to a sincere penitence for their sins and mending their ways The ravages of famine and pestilence were followed by a severe and widespread earthquake which hit the region covering Syria, Asia Minor and Iraq The devastation and destruction wrought by the earthquake can be judged from the fact that in the town of Nabulus[2] and its surrounding district 20,000 people were crushed under the fallen houses Another historian writes in *Mirʾāt al-Zaman* that eleven hundred thousand people died as a result of this earthquake[3]

On the one hand, these natural calamities were visiting the Islamic world with unwelcome regularity, and, on the other, fratricidal feuds and forays were continuing unabated In 601 A H the two chiefs belonging to the same family, Qatādah Husaini of Mecca and Sālim Husami of Madina were locked up in a hotly contested battle[4] In 603 A.H the deadly feuds between the Ghorids of Afghanistan and the ruler of Khwarism flared up which encouraged the Muslims to waste their energy and power by shedding each others' blood[5] This was the state of affairs on the one side, while the Christendom had inflamed another Crusade,[6] on the other, barely two years after the death of Salah ud-din, and landed[7] its forces on the Syrian coast in 604 A H The rulers of

1 Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, p 26
2 Also known as Shechem, is in Jordan
3 The estimate may appear to be somewhat exaggerated
4 Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, p 41
5 *Ibid*, Vol XIII, p 45
6 A general tax known as Saladin tenth was imposed in 1198 for the recovery of Palestine by Pope Innocent the Third
7. Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, pp 48-49.

al-Jazirah[1] were secretly in league with the Franks[2] in 607 A.H. while Damietta in Egypt, a city of considerable military importance, had fallen to the Crusaders in 616 A.H.[3]

In the metropolis of Islam, Baghdad, the magnificence and splendour of the Caliph's court, copied from the etiquettes and ceremonials observed by the Iranian and Byzantine Emperors had touched the summit of extravagance. It is difficult to imagine the wealth amassed by such personal servants of the Caliphs as pages, cupbearers, intendants of wardrobe who normally entered the service merely as slaves The annual income from the property acquired by ʿAla ud-dīn al-Tabrasī al-Zāhrī a slave purchased by the Caliph al-Zāhir is reported to have been as much as three hundred thousand *Dinars* The house built by him in Baghdad was conspicuous for its size and beauty. Similar was the case with other state officials—Mujahid ud-dīn Aibek. al-Salāh ʿAbdul Ghani to name only a few The former had an annual income of five lakh *Dinars* while the latter although an illiterate man lived like a prince Annalists have left staggering accounts of their lavish expenditure on the marriages of their sons and daughters On the other hand the teachers of the celebrated Madarsa al-Mustansaryah were doled out such paltry sums which bore no comparison to the wages paid to the meanest of the state officials The most erudite scholars and professors did not get more than twelve *Dinars* a month while the servant of al-Sharābi. a grandee of the ʿAbbāsid regime, could spend four thousand *Dinars* on a marriage and pay another three thousand as the price of a bird brought for him from Mosul.[4]

The royal processions of the Caliphs on the occasion of *ʿId* and to mark the anniversary of their succession to throne were seized as an opportunity for ostentatious display of royal pomp and

1 Northern part of the territory falling between the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris

2 Ibn Kathīr, Vol XIII, pp. 58-59

3 *Ibid*, Vol XIII, p 79

4 For details see *Al-Hawādith al-Jamiʿah* and *al-Asjad il-Masbūk*

pageantry. The whole of Baghdad came out to witness these processions in a mood, free and easy, amusing and entertaining itself and oblivious of even obligatory congregational prayers. In 640 A. H. the royal procession taken out on the occasion of *ᶜId* terminated after the night-fall with the result that most of the people witnessing the procession performed the *ᶜId* prayers just before midnight.[1] Again in 644 A. H. a large number of people missed the prayers on the occasion of *ᶜId al-Ad'ha* and performed the same at the time of sunset.

The usual mode of making obeisance to the Caliph was to bow almost to the ground, or touch the ground with one's nose, but nobody even felt in it anything opposed to the teachings of the *Sharīᶜah* or degrading to his independent and manly character. Confiscation of private property had become a common affair, illegal gratification by officials was widely prevalent, immodesty and grossness of conduct was on the increase, the Batinites, charlatans and swindlers were basking in sunshine, everyone seemed to be after wealth, love of music had grown almost into a craze, in short, the common pursuits of the people and the social and moral disintegration of the society threw a lurid light on the state of chaos then prevailing in the Muslim world.[2]

This was the time when the Mongols were devastating Turkistan and Iran and were casting a covetous glance over Baghdad. "The year 626 A. H. began," writes Ibn Kathir, "with the indecisive yet sanguinary battles between the monarchs of the house of Ayyubids." Such a state of chaos prevailed in Baghdad, the centre of Caliphate, that from 640 A. H. to 643 A. H. no arrangements could be made by the Caliph for sending out *Hajj* parties nor was the covering for Kᶜaba sent by the Caliph. For 21 days the walls of the holy shrine remained without a cover, which was taken as an ill-omen by the people.

Ahmad Abul ᶜAbbās succeeded his father, Caliph al-Mustadhi, in 575 A. H. under the title of Al-Nasir li' Din-Illāh. He had had

1 *Al-Asjad il-Masbūq*, Events, 640 A. H.

2 Article *Asr al-Shuubi bi-Baghdad* by Naji Maᶜarūf in the Journal *Al-Aqlām*, Baghdad, Muharram 1386 A. H.

an opportunity to rule for forty-six years His reign was the longest one ever enjoyed by any ʿAbbāsid Caliph yet, perhaps, it was also the darkest of all the regimes of the house of ʿAbbāsids Historians have severely criticised his regime for tyranny and mal-administration Writes Ibn al-Athīr

> "He was a tyrant who ill-treated the populace Iraq was a devastated land during his regime, its population migrated to neighbouring countries, and their possessions were confiscated by the Caliph He gave contradictory orders rescinded the orders given by him a day earlier. Being too much interested in sports and pastime, he had prescribed a special uniform which could be put on only by those permitted to take part in gymnastics and athletic sports His orders so severely curtailed the sports that these activities practically came to an end in Iraq His interest in the entertainments had grown almost into a craze Iranians accuse him of inviting the Mongols to attack the Muslim territories[1] and hatching a conspiracy for the same"[2]

Al-Nāsir li'Din-Illāh died in 622 A H and Mustansir b'Illāh (623-640) ascended the throne[3] He was a just, mild, benevolent and pious ruler, recalling the right-guided Caliphs', but unfortunately he did not get enough time to reform the administration He was succeeded by his son Mustʿasim b'Illah in 640 A H He too was a pious and just sovereign who never touched wine nor indulged in immodest acts He had committed the Qur'ān to memory and observed fast on the Mondays and Thursdays in addition to those during the months of Ramadhan and Rajab He is reported to be punctual in the performance of prayers but, according to Ibn al-Athīr, he was too mild and miserly and also lacked foresight

1 In order to weaken the kingdom of Khwarizm

2 *Al-Kāmil* Vol XII, p 181

3 Al-Zāhir, succeeded Al-Nasir in 622 A H but al-Mustansir ascended the throne only after a year in 623 A H after the death of al-Zahir

4 Ibn Kathīr, Vol XIII, p 159

In 642 A.H., a man by the name of Muwayyid ud-dīn Muhammad Ibn ᶜAlqami[1] was appointed as Prime Minister by the Caliph Mustᶜasim. Disorders and disturbances were a source of constant trouble in Baghdad specially when the Sunnis and Shiᶜahs quarrelled in 655 A.H. It is reported that in these riots the Shiᶜah quarters including those of the relatives of Ibn ᶜAlqami were plundered which led him to seek revenge from the Sunnis.[2] Although the danger of the Mongol invasion was hovering over Baghdad, a great reduction was made in the armed forces on the advice of Ibn ᶜAlqami. The number of cavalry was reduced to mere 10,000, their allowances and promotions were withheld; the disbanded soldiers were directed to take to trade and husbandry with the result that many of them were later on seen begging alms in the bazaars and in front of the mosques. Islam was reduced to the state of imbecility which led many poets to compose elegies to lament the helplessness of the Muslim peoples.[3]

Al-Mustᶜasim was personally a man of unimpeachable character. He also wanted to reform administration and bring peace and prosperity in his realm but unfortunately he lacked the courage, zeal and ability of the founders of empires which alone could have saved the situation by infusing a breath of new life in the then tottering society and the administration. It has happened more than once that the last monarch of any ruling dynasty was just and wise, virtuous and humane but the degeneration of social and political order had reached the point in his time where its only natural outcome was final decay and crumbling down of that dynasty. This was the case with Mustᶜasim too whom Providence had chosen for the badge of infamy, although he was better than most of his predecessors and had also a desire to set right the fastly deteriorating situation.

It is undoubtedly true that a group of people, pure in spirit and righteous in conduct, were there teaching and preaching in

1 His full name was Muwayyid ud-dīn Abū Talib Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn ᶜAli Muhammad ᶜAlQami.

2 Ibn Kathīr, Vol. XIII, p. 196.

3 *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 201.

the mosques and seminaries of Baghdad but the affluent and those in authority had become so corrupt that an annalist of that age, Abul Hasan Khazraji had to describe the conditions prevailing in his time in these words:

> "The desire to acquire estates and effects has become a craze with these people who never think of the community's welfare. They are so engrossed in feathering their own nests that it can never be deemed as a rightful course The officials of the government are all tyrants who are obsessed with the idea of amassing as much wealth as possible... This is the most dangerous state of affairs for the government can co-exist with apostasy but never with tyranny."[1]

In the eastern part of the Islamic world, the kingdom of Khwarism, raised towards the end of the fifth century of the Muslim era on the ruins of Saljukid Empire, held sway over almost the entire Islamic territories excluding the principalities of Saljukid Sultans over parts of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Hejaz and Asia Minor and that of the Ghorids in Afghanistan. Sultan ʿAla ud-din Muhammad Khwarism Shah (596-617) was one of the most powerful Muslim monarchs or perhaps the greatest sovereign of his day. Harold Lamb writes in his famous book *Genghiz Khan*.

> "In the centre of Islam, Mohammed Shah of Kharesm had enthroned himself as war lord His domain extended from India to Baghdad, and from the sea of Aral to the Persian Gulf Except for the Seljuk Turks, victors over the crusaders, and the rising Memluk dynasty in Egypt, his authority was supreme. He was the emperor, and the Kalif – who quarrelled with him but might not deny him— was restricted to the spiritual authority of a pope."[2]

Muslim historians have not mentioned any noticeable personal laxity in the character or moral behaviour of Khwarism Shah On the other hand, they speak of him as a brave and

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1 Article *Asr al-Sharābi bi-Baghdad* by Naji Maʿaruf in the journal *al-Aqlām* of Baghdad, Muharram, 1386 A H

2 Harold Lamb, p 120

chivalrous ruler, just and pious, but there is no denying the fact that he spent his prowess and capabilities in subjugating the Muslim Kingdoms around his dominions. In the north-west of his territory he forced the Saljukids to retreat to the farthest end while he restrained the westward ambitions of the Ghorids by subjugating Khorasan, Mazandran,[1] Kirman, Ghazni and Trans-oxiana These unending wars of Khwarism Shah had, nevertheless, worn out his troops who had to strain every nerve in achieving the conquests they had had so far Apart from the war-phobia normally created by the continuous warfare over a long period of time, the conquest of the most fertile and industrially developed areas had brought to the capital of Khwarism Shah all that toil and labour could produce, along with the attendant vices of opulance and luxury It is difficult to find any detailed account of these social ills in the annals of the time which are mostly concerned with the descriptions of kings and emperors Unfortunately, however, the treatises and sermons, monographs and discourses of the saints and preachers, which would have thrown a lurid light on the subject were all destroyed by the Mongolian avalanche There is hardly any reason for attributing the following statement of Harold Lamb to his religious prejudice or exaggeration

> "It was a martial world, appreciative of song, with an ear not unmusical A world beset by inward throes, slave-ridden, wealth gathering, and more than a little addicted to vice and intrigue It left the management of its affairs to extortioners and its women to the custody of eunuchs, and its conscience to the keeping of Allah "[2]

The Sultans of Khwarism made the same fatal mistake which was committed by the Moors in Spain—an unpardonable blunder under the Divine Law of Retribution governing the historical process They set about, body and soul, to extend and strengthen

1 Mazandran was a province to the south of Caspian Sea bounded on the west by Gilān, and on the south by the province of Astarābad

2 Harold Lamb p 117

Lamb whose accounts agree with those left by Muslim historians.[1] He says

> "But the Mongol's experiment with trade came to an abrupt end A caravan of several hundred merchants from Karakorum was seized by one, Inaljuk,[2] governor of Otrar, a frontier citadel belonging to the Shah. Inaljuk reported to his master that spies were among the merchants—which may very well have been the case
>
> "Mohammed Shah, without considering the matter overmuch, sent to his governor an order to slay the merchants, and all of them, accordingly, were put to death. This, in due time, was reported to Genghiz Khan who dispatched envoys at once to the Shah to protest And Mohammed saw fit to slay the chief of the envoys and burn off the beards of the others.
>
> "When the survivors of his embassy returned to Genghiz Khan, the master of the Gobi went apart to a mountain to meditate upon the matter. The slaying of a Mongol envoy could not go unpunished, tradition required revenge for the wrong inflicted.
>
> "There cannot be two suns in the heavens," the Khan said, "or two *Kha Khans* upon the earth."[3]

The Tartaric Invasion :

Thus the storm burst in 616 A H Bukhara was first razed to the ground, and its inhabitants put to the sword. Samarkand was reduced to ashes and its entire population passed under the sword Other important and populous cities like Ray,[4] Hamadan,[5] Zanjan,[6]

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1 Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, pp 200-204 and al-Kamil, Vol XII, p 149

2 Minhaj ud-din, has given his name as Kadar Khan (*Tabqāt-i-Nāsiri*, p 272)

3 Harold Lamb, pp 116-117

4 Ray—The ancient town of Ragha, to the south-east of Tehran and to the south of spur projecting from Elburz into the plain

5 Hamadan lies in the fertile plain at the foot of Mt Elmend in Persia.

6 Zanjan—A town in the northern Persia

Qazwin,[1] Marv,[2] Nishapur[3] met the same fate The forces of Khwarism Shah, the most powerful Muslim sovereign of his day, were simply swept away by the tempest of the Mongol arms, Khwarism Shah was himself hunted from place to place by the Tartars with ruthless pertinacity Muhammad Khwarism Shah ultimately took refuge in an unknown island in the Caspian Sea, where he died broken-hearted, alone and abandoned

Khwarism Shah had already dismembered the independent Islamic Kingdoms of Iran and Turkistan and, therefore, none had remained in the east to check the onslaught of the Mongols after his defeat The Muslims were so seized with the terror of the Mongols that often a lonely Tartar attacked a hundred of them but none had the heart to defend himself—everyone of them was killed by the Tartar without being opposed by a single Muslim Once a Mongol woman, dressed as a man, plundered a house and killed all its inmates excepting a captive It was only after this that the captive somehow came to know that the marauder was a woman, and then he could muster his courage to kill her It often happened that a Mongol caught hold of a Muslim and asked him to wait till he brought a sabre to slaughter him, and this poor man did not have the courage to run away in the absence of the Mongol [4]

"The scourge of God" was the greatest of calamities before which almost the entire world of Islam was swept away as by a torrent, it left the Muslims astounded and terror-stricken The Mongols came to be regarded so invincible that an Arabic proverb

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1 Qazwin—A town in Persia in the province of Irāk-Ajami, 100 miles to the south of Tehran, at the foot of Mt Elburz

2 Marv—The principal town and centre of culture in the rich oasis which occupies the lower course of river Murghāb in Persia

3 Nishapur—The most important of the four great cities of Khurasān, it was one of the greatest cities of middle ages

4 For details *see* Ibn al-Athir, Al-Kamil, Vol XII and *Dairatul Ma'ārif Lil-Bustām*, Vol VI

gained currency which meant that if anybody tells you that the Tartars have suffered a defeat, don't believe him. Death and destruction was a foregone conclusion for all the lands through which the Tartar hordes passed; palaces, mosques and mausoleums were all levelled to the ground and trampled into dust. Historians are normally prone to be objective in their assessment of the past events but even such a cool and temperate historian as Ibn al-Athir could not help shedding his tears over the havoc and ruin caused by the savage ardour of the Mongols for rapine and slaughter. Speaking of these events in a harrowing strain Ibn al-Athir says:

> "These events are so frightful and heart-rending that for several years I was in a fix whether I should narrate these happenings or not. I have, however, penned these facts most reluctantly. In truth and reality, it is not easy to recount the tale of carnage and atrocities perpetrated on the Muslims, nor can one bear with equanimity the abasement to which they were subjected. I only wish that my mother had not given me birth! Oh, would that I had died before I had to relate this tale of woe! Some of my friends had insisted that I should record these events but I was still irresolute. Later, it dawned on me that it was of no profit to forego the task. The invasion of the Tartars was one of the greatest of calamities and the most terrible of visitations of which there is no parallel in the annals of the world. This calamity fell on all nations, but on the Muslims more than all. If one were to claim that the world, since God created it to the present times, was never so afflicted, one would speak truthfully, for, history records no other event which approaches it, and perhaps the world may not see its like again except the calamity of Gog and Magog till the dawn of the Doomsday. The Tartars put to the sword all men, women and children, cut open the bellies of the pregnant women and trampled the babies to death. *Verily, unto God do we belong and unto Him shall we return. There is no power, no might but from Allah, the Most High, the Great.*
>
> "This was an affliction which overwhelmed the entire

world, like a severe torrent it suddenly swept over all the lands."[1]

The author of *Mirsād ul-ʿAbād*, who belonged to Hamdan and was born at Ray, and was thus an eye-witness to the Mongol invasion, has left the following harrowing account:

"The year 617 A.H. shall ever remain conspicuous in the annals of the world, for the hordes of heathen Tartars gained ascendancy over the Muslims in that year. The way they ravaged the countries, killed the people and plundered and burnt the cities has a parallel neither in the days of Ignorance nor thereafter . . It is enough to mention that in Ray, where I was born and lived, in Turkistan and in the lands extending from Rūm to Syria more than seven hundred thousand persons were either put to sword or made captives. The calamity befalling Islam and its adherents is beyond description and the holocaust is rather too well-known to require any detailed enumeration. God forbid, none of the monarchs and sovereigns of Islam felt the urge to defend the honour of Islam, nor were they alive to their duty of coming to the rescue of their subjects although they were like a shepherd unto their own people, and that they would have to render an account in regard to their safety on the Day of Judgement. It was their duty to have strained every nerve to strengthen Islam and defend the faith as God has ordered. *Go forth, light-armed and heavy-armed, and strive with your wealth and your lives in the way of Allah.*[2] They should have sacrificed everything they had—their lives, riches, dominions—for the honour of Islam. This would have given heart to others and fired a frenzy of enthusiasm among the Muslims, which would have contained and turned back the onslaught of the heathens.

"But now nothing remains except to seek the refuge of God. Whatever of Islam is still visible is exposed to the

1. *Al-Kamil*, Vol. XII, pp. 147-148
2. *At-Taubah*: 41

> danger of being completely effaced leaving no trace of it whatsoever "[1]

Not the Muslims alone, but the entire civilized world trembled before the savage Tartar hordes Their atrocities had caused a flutter even in those far off corners of the then world where Tartars could have hardly been expected to carry their arms

Edward Gibbon writes in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

> "The Latin world was darkened by this cloud of savage hostility, a Russian fugitive carried the alarm to Sweden, and the remote nations of the Baltic and the ocean trembled at the approach of the Tartars,[2] whom their fear and ignorance were inclined to separate from the human species "[3]

The maddening frenzy for death and destruction aroused by Chenghiz Khan amongst the Mongols and the significance of this upsurge has been well summed up by the authors of the *Cambridge Medieval History*

> "Unchecked by human valour, they were able to overcome the terrors of vast deserts, the barriers of mountains and seas, the severities of climate, and the ravages of famine and pestilence No dangers could appal them, no stronghold could resist them, no prayer for mercy could move them . We are confronted with a new power in history, with a force that was to bring to an abrupt end as a *deus ex machina*, many dramas that would otherwise have

1 Rāzī, pp 8-10

2 In the year 1238, the inhabitants of Gothia (Sweden) and Frise were prevented, by their fear of the Tartars from sending, as usual, their ships to the herring fishery on the coast of England, and, as there was no exportation forty or fifty of these fish were sold for a shilling (Mathew Paris, p 396) It is whimsical enough that the orders of a Mogul Khan, who reigned on the borders of China should have lowered the price of herrings in the English market

3 Gibbon, p 16

ended in a deadlock, or would have dragged on an interminable course."[1]

Harold Lamb continues on the impact of Chenghiz Khan:

"This 'new power in history'—the ability of one man to alter human civilization—began with Genghiz Khan and ended with his grandson Kubilai, when the Mongol empire tended to break up. It has not reappeared since."[2]

Sack of Baghdad

At last in 656 A. H. the myriads of savages and heathens advanced towards Baghdad, killing every man that came in their way, setting fire to every habitation and trampling into dust whatever they could not possess. The metropolis of Islam, celebrated throughout the world as the centre of civilization, learning and crafts was reduced to ashes, the sack of Baghdad is too harrowing and lengthy to be detailed here. The accounts given by the contemporary historians include some eye-witness accounts of the carnage and atrocities committed by the Mongols. Ibn al-Athir writes:

"The horrors of rapine and slaughter lasted forty days, and, after the carnage was over, the most populous and beautiful city of the world was so devastated that only a few people could be seen here and there. All the streets and markets were strewn with dead bodies, heaps of corpses were to be found like small mounds from place to place. After the rains the dead bodies began to rot giving out a disagreeable smell of the putrid flesh and then a deadly pestilence ravaged the town which spread as far as the land of Syria. Innumerable people died as a result of this epidemic. The ravages of a terrible famine and pestilence and the rising prices reigned over the city thereafter."[3]

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1 Harold Lamb, p. 210

2 *Ibid.*, p. 210

3 Ibn Kathir, Vol. XIII, pp. 202-203 (Abbreviated)

Taj ud-din Ibn al-Subki gives his own account of the barbarous acts of Mongols

> "Halaku received the Caliph (al-Must'asim) in a tent while Ibn 'Alqami invited the doctors of religion and other notables of the city to be a witness to the agreement between Halaku and the Caliph. When they had repaired to the Mongol camp, all were passed under the sword They were called one by one in a tent and beheaded until none amongst the chiefs and counsellors of the Caliph remained alive It was commonly believed that if the blood of the Caliph fell on the ground, some great calamity would overtake the world Halaku was, therefore, hesitant but Nasir ud-din Tūsi[1] intervened to suggest that the problem

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1 An Iranian historian confirms the incident in his book *Ahwāl-o-Athār-i-Khwaja Nasir ud-din Tūsi*, which has been published by the Tehran University He says that Tūsi was at last successful in his endeavour to dismember the Caliphate and to reduce the castle of the Caliph to dust Halaku had already been commissioned by his brother Khakan Mangu to put an end to the Caliphate after destroying the Batinites Halaku sent messages of submission to the Caliph which, however, remained unheeded Thereafter Halaku consulted his counsellors whether or not the stars were favourable for mounting an attack A Sunni astrologer, Husām ud-din by name, advised Halaku that the time was most inopportune for launching an attack on Baghdad and anyone who desired to harm the Caliph at that hour would be defeated and suffer a grevious loss Husām ud-din said that if Halaku persisted in his attempt, there would be no rains, torrents and hurricanes will devastate the world and, what is more, the Khakan would be dead Halaku was dismayed but he asked Tūsi, "What would happen if I attack Baghdad" "Nothing", replied Tūsi, "except that Khan will be monarch in place of the Caliph" Thereupon Halaku ordered Tūsi and Husām ud din to debate the issue before him "Thousands of the companions of the Prophet were killed," argued Tūsi, "but nothing happened Even if you attribute any special piety and charismatic power to the 'Abbāsids, look at Tāhir who killed Amin under the orders of Māmūn, or Mutawakkil who was strangled to death by his sons and slaves, or else Muntasir and Mu'tadhid who were done to death by their chiefs and guards ! Did ever any calamity overtake the world ?" (*Nasir ud-din Tūsi*, pp 9 19)

could easily be solved The Caliph should be killed, he suggested, in a way that his blood did not fall on the ground. The Caliph was accordingly rolled in a carpet and then beaten to death."[1]

The general massacre continued in Baghdad for more than a month. Only those could save themselves who were able to find a hiding place Halaku then ordered, it is related, to count the dead, who numbered eighteen hundred thousand.[2]

Christians were asked to take bacon and wine publicly Although it was the month of Ramadhan, the Muslims of Baghdad were compelled to participate in these drinking bouts Wine was sprinkled in the mosques and the call for prayer was prohibited. Nothing so despicable had happened since the foundations of Baghdad were laid the city had come under the heathen rule for the first time and had never before undergone such a humiliation [3]

In spite of all its vices and weaknesses, Baghdad was the metropolis of Islam, a centre of learning, arts and crafts as well as a city of mosques and shrines, saints and preachers Its destruction made the heart of every Muslim bleed, the heart-rending account of its ruin was rendered by many poets into songs of mourning S'adi of Shiraz who had lived in Baghdad during his student days and had seen the city in its hey-day of glory, has described the fall of Baghdad in a language that shows his depth of misery.

"For it has seen the kingdom of Must'asim destroyed,
The heaven would be justified if it sheds the rain-tears of blood.

If you will rise on the Day of Judgement, O Muhammad,
Rise now to see the most severe affliction.

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1. *Tabqāt al-Shafi'iyah,* Vol V, pp 114-115
2 Some historians have given a lower estimate but the figure should not be off the mark for Baghdad had then a population of two and a half millions (*Tabqāt al-Shafi'iyah,* Vol V, p 115)
3. *Tabqāt al-Shafi'iyah,* Vol V, p 115

The blood of beauties slaughtered in the castle,
Overflows the gates of the palace
And our tears stain our garments.
Beware of the turn of time and its vicissitudes,
For who knew the glorious would come to such an abrupt end.
Lo! you had seen the glory of the house of Caliphs,
Where the Caesars and Khakans bowed low in obeisance
The blood of the progeny of Muhammad's uncle,
Is shed on the very earth where the Sultans placed their heads
Coloured with blood, the waters of the Tigris will turn the ground red,
If it flows to irrigate the desert oasis of Bat'ha [1]
Defaced by the calamity it has had to suffer,
Wrinkles of waves are seen on the face of the Tigris
No elegy is really befitting the elevated souls,
Whose minimum reward is the bliss of God in Paradise,
I am shedding my tears only in sympathy,
For Muslims they were, and I hold them dear"[2]

From Baghdad, the Mongol hordes marched on to Haleb (Aleppo), sacked the city and turned to Damascus They captured Damascus in Jamadi al-Ūla, 658 A H The Christian inhabitants of the city came out with presents to greet the conquerors Ibn Kathir who belonged to Damascus, has portrayed the joy of Christians and the helplessness of the Muslims in these words

> "The Christians came back by the Gate of Toma, carrying the cross over their heads and shouting slogans They were praising Christianity and openly disparaging Islam and the Muslims They had flasks of wine from which they sprinkled the liquor in front of the mosques and

1 Madina
2 S'adi, pp 56-57

> on the faces of Muslims they happened to pass by, ordering the Muslims to pay homage to their emblem Muslims could not restrain themselves for long and gathered in large numbers and pushed them back to the Cathedral of Mary where a Christian clergy delivered a speech praising Christianity and denigrating Islam and its followers "[1]

Thereafter Ibn Kathir continues his description on the authority of *Zail ul-Mira'ta.*

> "The Christians then entered the mosque with wine in their hands They intended to pull down a number of mosques in case the reign of Tartars continued for sometime more *ᶜUlema*, Cadis and other Muslim notables repaired to the citadel of the Tartar governor El Siyan to make a complaint about the excesses of the Christians but they were turned out by him El Siyan, however, gave a hearing to the Christians *Verily, unto God do we belong and unto Him shall we return* "[2]

After the fall of Syria, the Mongols wanted to carry their arms to Egypt which was the only Muslim country still out of their reach The Sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Muzaffar Saif ud-din Qataz knew that his country would be the next target of the Mongols, and also, that it would be difficult to hold off those savages if they were allowed to make adequate preparations for invading his lands He, therefore, decided to attack the Mongols in Syria before they were able to consolidate their power The forces of Egypt accordingly met the Mongols at ᶜAin Jalut, a town below Nazareth in Palestine, on the 25th of Ramadhan, 658 A H, under the command of Baibers who afterwards became the sovereign of Egypt Unlike previous battles the Muslims met the Mongols in a hotly contested battle and drove back the stream of savage hordes The Egyptians pursued the defeated Mongols, slaughtering and capturing a large number of them, east-ward beyond the Euphrates Al-Suyūti writes in *Tārīkh ul-Khulfā'*

> "The Muslims were, by the grace of God, victorious

1 Ibn Kathir, Vol XIII, pp 219-220

2 *Ibid*, Vol XIII, pp 219 220

and they inflicted a grevious defeat on the Tartars A large number of Tartars were put to the sword The retreating Tartars were so disheartened that people easily caught hold of them and despoiled them of their possessions"[1]

Sultan Baibers defeated the Tartars in many a fierce battles after the battle of ʿAin Jalūt and thus disproved the proverb that the Tartars were invincible

Conversion of the Mongols:

Islam was about to be submerged in the whirl-pool of the Mongol ardour of slaughter and destruction, as several Muslim writers had then expressed the fear, wiping it out of existence, but Islam suddenly began to capture the hearts of the savage Tartars The preachers of Islam thus accomplished a task which the sword-arm of the faith had failed to perform by carrying the message of Islam to the barbaric hordes of heathen Mongols

Conversion of the Mongols to Islam was indeed one of the few unpredictable events of history The Tartaric wave of conquest which had swept away the entire Islamic east within a short period of one year was, in truth, not so astounding as the Mongol's acceptance of Islam during the zenith of their glory, for, the Muslims had by the beginning of the seventh century of Muslim era imbibed all those vices which are a natural outcome of the opulence, luxury and fast living The Mongols were, on the other hand, a wild and ferocious, yet vigorous and sturdy race who could have hardly been expected to submit to the spiritual and cultural superiority of a people so completely subdued by them, and who were also looked down and despised by them The author of the *Preaching of Islam*, T W Arnold has also expressed his amazement over the achievement of this unbelieveable feat

"But Islam was to rise again from the ashes of its former grandeur and through its preachers win over these savage conquerors to the acceptance of the faith This was a task for the missionary energies of Islam that was rendered

1 *Tārīkh al-Khulfā'* p 191

more difficult from the fact that there were two powerful competitors in the field. The spectacle of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam emulously striving to win the allegiance of the fierce conquerors that had set their feet on the necks of adherents of these great missionary religions, is one that is without parallel in the history of the world[1] .. ...

"For Islam to enter into competition with such powerful rivals as Buddhism and Christianity were at the outset of the period of Mongol rule, must have appeared a well-nigh hopeless undertaking For the Muslims had suffered more from the storm of the Mongol invasions than the others Those cities that had hitherto been the rallying points of spiritual organisation and learning for Islam in Asia, had been for the most part laid in ashes: the theologians and pious doctors of the faith, either slain or carried away into captivity.[2] Among the Mongol rulers—usually so tolerant towards all religions—there were some who exhibited varying degrees of hatred towards the Muslim faith Chingiz Khān ordered all those who killed animals in the Muhammadan fashion to be put to death, and this ordinance was revived by Qūbilāy, who by offering rewards to informers set on foot a sharp persecution that lasted for seven years, as many poor persons took advantage of this ready means of gaining wealth, and slaves accused their masters in order to gain their freedom.[3] During the reign of Kuyūk

1. Arnold, p 219

2 So notoriously brutal was the treatment they received that even the Chinese showmen in their exhibitions of shadow figures exultingly brought forward the figure of an old man with a white beard dragged by the neck at the tail of a horse, as showing how the Mongol horsemen behaved towards the Musalmans [Sir H H. Howarth : *History of the Mongols*, London (1876—80) Vol I, p 159]

3 This edict was only withdrawn when it was found that it prevented Muhammadan merchants from visiting the court and that trade suffered in consequence (*Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* A general history of the Muhammadan dynasties of Asia, by Minhāj ud-dīn Abū 'Umar-i-'Usman London. 1881, p 1146 and Howarth Vol I, pp 112, 273).

(1246-1248), who left the conduct of affairs entirely to his two Christian ministers and whose court was filled with Christian monks, the Muhammadans were made to suffer great severities[1] . . .

"Arghun (1284-1291) the fourth Ilkhān persecuted the Musalmans and took away from them all posts in the departments of justice and finance, and forbade them to appear at his court [2]

"In spite of all difficulties, however, the Mongols and the savage tribes that followed in their wake[3] were at length brought to submit to the faith of those Muslim peoples whom they had crushed beneath their feet."[4]

Unbelievable and of far-reaching significance, although the conversion of the Mongols to Islam had been, it is also not less surprising that extremely few and scanty records of this glorious achievement are to be found in the annals of the time The names of only a few dedicated saviours of Islam who won proselytes from the savage hordes are known to the world, but their venture was no less daring nor their achievement less significant than the accomplishment of the warriors of the faith Their memory shall always be enriched by the gratitude of Muslims for they had, in reality, performed a great service to the humanity in general and to the Muslims in particular, by diffusing the knowledge of faith among those barbarians, winning them over to the service of one God and making them the standard-bearers of the Apostle of Peace.

After the death of Chenghiz Khan the great heritage of that Mongol conqueror was divided into four dominions headed by the offsprings of his sons. The message of Islam had begun to

1 Howorth, Vol I, p 165

2. C L J De Guignes, Histoire Generale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mogols, (Paris, 1756 58), Vol III, p 265

3 In the thirteenth century, three-fourths of Mongol hosts were Turks (Leon, Cahun, Introduction a l'histoire de l'Asie Turcs et Mongols Paris 1896, p. 279).

4 Arnold, pp 225-227.

spread among all these four sections of the Mongols who were rapidly converted to the faith. In regard to the conversion of the ruling princes in the lineage of Batu, the son of Chenghiz Khan's first born Juji, who ruled the western portion as Khan of the Golden Horde, writes Arnold.

> "The first Mongol ruling prince who professed Islam was Baraka Khān, who was chief of the Golden Horde from 1256 to 1267.[1] According to Abū'l-Ghāzī he was converted after he had come to the throne. He is said one day to have fallen in with a caravan coming from Bukhārā, and taking two of the merchants aside, to have questioned them on the doctrines of Islam, and they expounded to him their faith so persuasively that he became converted in all sincerity. He first revealed his change of faith to his youngest brother, whom he induced to follow his example, and then made open profession of his new belief[2] ... Baraka Khān entered into a close alliance with the Mamlūk Sultan of Egypt, Rukn al-Dīn Baybars The initiative came from the latter, who had given a hospitable reception to a body of troops, two hundred in number, belonging to the Golden Horde, these men, observing the growing enmity between their Khān and Hūlāgū, the conqueror of Baghdād, in whose army they were serving, took flight into Syria, whence they were honourably conducted to Cairo to the court of Baybars, who persuaded them to embrace Islam"

1 It is of interest to note that Najm al-Dīn Mukhtār al-Zāhidī in 1260 compiled for Baraka Khān a treatise which gave the proofs of the divine mission of the Prophet, a refutation of those who denied it, and an account of the controversies between Christians and Muslims (Moritz Steinschneider Polemische und apologetische Litteratur in arabischer Sprache, Zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden Leipzig, 1877, pp 63 64)

2 Abu'l-Ghāzī Histoire des Mogols et des Tartares par Aboul Ghazi Behādour Khan, traduite par le Baron Desmaisons St Petersburg (1871-74) tome II p 181

3 Maqrīzī Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks de l'Egypte, traduite par M Quatremere (Paris, 1837-45), tome I, pp 180-81, 187

Baybars himself was at war with Hūlāgū, whom he had recently defeated and driven out of Syria. He sent two of the Mongol fugitives, with some other envoys, to bear a letter to Baraka Khān On their return these envoys reported that each princess and amir at the court of Baraka Khān had an imām and a mu'adhdhin, and the children were taught the Qur'ān in the schools [1] These friendly relations between Baybars and Baraka Khān brought many of the Mongols of the Golden Horde into Egypt[2], where they were prevailed upon to become Musalmans "[3]

Halaku had founded the dynasty of Ilkhans in Iran, to which he had later added a great part of Asia Minor Arnold relates the conversion of this branch of Chenghiz Khan's progeny in these words

"In Persia, where Hūlāgū founded the dynasty of the Ilkhāns, the progress of Islam among the Mongols was much slower In order to strengthen himself against the attacks of Baraka Khān and the Sultan of Egypt, Hūlāgū accepted the alliance of the Christian powers of the East, such as the king of Armenia and the Crusaders His favourite wife was a Christian who favourably disposed the mind of her husband towards her co-religionists, and his son Abāqā Khān married the daughter of the Emperor of Constantinople His brother Takūdār[4], who succeeded him, was the first of the Ilkhāns who embraced Islam He had been brought up as a Christian, for (as a contemporary Christian writer[5] tells us), 'he was baptised when young and called by the name of Nicholas But when he was grown up, through his intercourse with Saracens of whom

1 Maqrīzi Histoire des Sultans Mamlouks de l'Egypte, traduite par M Quatremere (Paris, 1837-45) tome I, p 215

2 *Ibid*, p 222

3 Arnold, pp 227-29

4 Wassāf calls him Nikūdār before and Ahmad after his conversion

5 Hayton (Ramusio, tome II, p 60, c)

he was very fond, he became a base Saracen, and, renouncing the Christian faith, wished to be called Muhammad Khān, and strove with all his might that the Tartars should be converted to the faith and sect of Muhammad, and when they proved obstinate, not daring to force them, he brought about their conversion by giving them honours and favours and gifts, so that in his time many Tartars were converted to the faith of the Saracens'. This prince sent the news of his conversion to the Sultan of Egypt in the following letter —'By the power of God Almighty, the mandate of Ahmad to the Sultan of Egypt God Almighty (praised be his name !) by His grace preventing us and by the light of His guidance, hath guided us in our early youth and vigour into the true path of the knowledge of His deity and the confession of His unity, to bear witness that Muhammad (on whom rest the highest blessings !) is the Prophet of God, and to reverence His saints and His pious servants 'Whom God shall please to guide, that man's breast will He open to Islam '[1] We ceased not to incline our heart to the promotion of the faith and the improvement of the condition of Islam and the Muslims, up to the time when the succession to the empire came to us from our illustrious father and brother, and God spread over us the glory of His grace and kindness, so that in the abundance of His favours our hopes were realised, and He revealed to us the bride of the kingdom, and she was brought forth to us a noble spouse Qūriltāy or general assembly was convened, wherein our brothers, our sons, great nobles, generals of the army and captains of the forces, met to hold council, and they were all agreed on carrying out the order of our elder brother, viz to summon here a vast levy of our troops whose numbers would make the earth, despite its vastness, appear too narrow, whose fury and fierce onset would fill the hearts of men with fear, being animated with a courage before which

1 Qur'ān, vi, 125

the mountain peaks bow down, and a firm purpose that makes the hardest rocks grow soft. We reflected on this their resolution which expressed the wish of all, and we concluded that it ran counter to the aim we had in view—to promote the common weal, i e to strengthen the ordinance of Islam, never, as far as lies in our power, to issue any order that will not tend to prevent bloodshed, remove the ills of men, and cause the breeze of peace and prosperity to blow on all lands, and the kings of other countries to rest upon the couch of affection and benevolence, whereby the commands of God will be honoured and mercy be shown to the people of God. Herein, God inspired us to quench this fire and put an end to these terrible calamities, and make known to those who advanced this proposal (of a levy) what it is that God has put into our hearts to do, namely, to employ all possible means for the healing of all the sickness of the world, and putting off what should only be appealed to as the last remedy For we desire not to hasten to appeal to arms, until we have first declared the right path, and will permit it only after setting forth the truth and establishing it with proofs Our resolve to carry out whatever appears to us good and advantageous has been strengthened by the counsels of the Shaykh al-Islām, the model of divines, who has given us much assistance in religious matters We have appointed our chief justice, Qutb al-Dīn and the Atābak, Bahā al-Dīn, both trustworthy persons of this flourishing kingdom, to make known to you our course of action and bear witness to our good intentions for the common weal of the Muslims, and to make it known that God has enlightened us, and that Islam annuls all that has gone before it, and that God Almighty has put it into our hearts to follow the truth and those who practice it. .... If some convincing proof be required, let men observe our actions. By the grace of God, we have raised aloft the standards of the faith, and borne witness to it in all our orders and our practice, so that the ordinances of

the law of Muhammad may be brought to the fore and firmly established in accordance with the principles of justice laid down by Ahmad Whereby we have filled the hearts of the people with joy, have granted free pardon to all offenders, and shown them indulgences, saying, 'May God pardon the past!' We have reformed all matters concerning the pious endowments of Muslims given for mosques, colleges, charitable institutions, and the rebuilding of caravanserais, we have restored their incomes to those to whom they were due according to the terms laid down by the donors We have ordered the pilgrims to be treated with respect, provision to be made for their caravans and for securing their safety on the pilgrim routes, we have given perfect freedom to merchants, travelling from one country to another, that they may go wherever they please; and we have strictly prohibited our soldiers and police from interfering with them in their comings or goings He seeks the alliance of the Sultan of Egypt 'so that these countries and cities may again be populated, these terrible calamities be put down, the sword be returned to the scabbard, that all peoples may dwell in peace and quietness, and the necks of the Muslims be freed from the ills of humiliation and disgrace "[1]

"To the student of the history of the Mongols it is a relief to pass from the recital of nameless horrors and continual bloodshed to a document emanating from a Mongol prince and giving expression to such humane and benevolent sentiments, which sound strange indeed coming from such lips

" A revolt broke out against him (Takūdār Ahmad), headed by his nephew Arghūn, who compassed his death and succeeded him on the throne During his brief reign (1284-1291), the Christians were once more

1 Wassāf Geschichte persisch herausgegeben und deutsch übersetzt von Hammer-Purgstall (Vienna, 1856) pp 231-34

restored to favour, while the Musalmans had to suffer persecution in their turn, were dismissed from their posts and driven away from the court [1]

"The successors of Takūdār were all heathen, until, in 1295, Ghāzān, the seventh and greatest of the Ilkhāns, became a Musalman and made Islam the ruling religion of Persia

"Ghāzān himself before his conversion had been brought up as a Buddhist and had erected several Buddhist temples in Khurāsān, and took great pleasure in the company of the priests of this faith, who had come into Persia in large numbers since the establishment of the Mongol supremacy over that country [2] He appears to have been naturally of a religious turn of mind, for he studied the creeds of the different religions of his time, and used to hold discussions with the learned doctors of each faith [3] Rashīd al-Dīn, his learned minister and the historian of his reign, maintained the genuineness of his conversion to Islam, the religious observances of which he zealously kept throughout his whole reign, though his contemporaries (and later writers have often re-echoed the imputation) represented[4] him as having only yielded to the solicitations of some Amīrs and Shaykhs."[5]

Ibn Kathir also relates, in the chronicles for the year 694 A H, that Ghazan embraced Islam during that year The accounts left by other historians show that the conversion of Ghazan was brought about by a pious Turk, Amir Tuzaun[6] by name Ibn Kathīr's version is as follows

"In this year the great-grandson of Chenghiz Khan,

1 C L J de Guignes Histoire generale des Huns des Turcs, des Mogols, (Paris, 1756-58), Vol III, pp 263-65

2 C d'Ohsson Histoire des Mongols, (The Hague 1834-35), tom IV, p 148

3 Ibid, p 365

4 Ibid, pp 148, 354, Cahun (op cit) p 434

5 Arnold, pp 229-33

6 Arnold and certain other historians have given his name as Nawruz Beg

Ghazan b. Arghun b Igha b. Tuli b. Chenghiz Khan announced his conversion to the faith of Islam, along with all or a majority of the Tartars under him, through the persuasion of Amir Tuzaun (on whom may rest the peace of God). Pearls, gold and silver balls were showered upon those who declared their allegiance to Islam; the King renamed himself as Mahmūd and attended Friday services, a number of heathen temples and Churches were demolished and poll-tax was levied on them; goods and properties confiscated from Baghdad and other Muslim cities were returned; and justice was restored to them. Rosaries were seen in the hands of Tartars, for which act of benevolence the people thanked God Almighty."[1]

Continuing the account relating to Islamisation of the Mongol's Kingdom of Persia, Arnold writes:

"His (Ghāzān's) brother, Uljāytū, who succeeded him in 1304, under the name of Muhammad Khudābandah, had been brought up as a Christian in the faith of his mother and had been baptised under the name of Nicholas, but after his mother's death, while he was still a young man, he became a convert to Islam through the persuasions of his wife[2] Ibn Batūtah says that his example exercised a great influence on the Mongols.[3] From this time forward Islam became the paramount faith in the Kingdom of the Ilkhāns."[4]

Coming to the story of the spread of Islam in the Middle Kingdom of the Mongols, Arnold says:

"The details that we possess of the progress of Islam in the Middle Kingdom, which fell to the lot of Chaghatay

1 Ibn Kathir, Vol. XIII, p 340

2 Hammer-Purgstall: Geschichte der Ilchanen, (Darmstadt 1842-43) Vol II, p. 182

3 Ibn Batūtah: Voyages d'Ibn Batoutah, texte arabe, accompagne d'une traduction par c Defremery et B R Sanguinetti (Paris 1853-58) Vol II, p 57

4. Arnold, p. 234

and his descendants, are still more meagre. Several of the princes of this line had a Muhammadan minister in their service, but they showed themselves unsympathetic to the faith of Islam. Chaghatāy harassed his Muhammadan subjects by regulations that restricted their ritual observances in respect of the killing of animals for food and of ceremonial washings Al-Jūzjānī says that he was the bitterest enemy of the Muslims among all the Mongol rulers and did not wish anyone to utter the word Musalman before him except with evil purpose.[1] Orghana, the wife of his grandson and successor, Qarā-Hūlāgū, brought up her son as a Musalman, and under the name of Mubarak Shāh he came forward in 1264 as one of the claimants of the disputed succession to the Chaghatāy Khānate, but he was soon driven from the throne by his cousin Burāq Khan, and appears to have exercised no influence on behalf of his faith, indeed judging from their names it would not appear that any of his own children even adopted the religion of their father [2] Burāq Khān is said to have 'had the blessedness of receiving the light of the faith' a few days before his death in 1270, and to have taken the name of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn,[3] but he was buried according to the ancient funeral rites of the Mongols, and not as a Musalman, and those who had been converted during his reign relapsed into their former heathenism. It was not until the next century that the conversion of Tarmāshīrīn Khān, about 1326, caused Islam to be at all generally adopted by the Chaghatāy Mongols, who when they followed the example of their chief this time remained true to their new faith

1 Jūzjānī Minhāj-i-Sirāj al-Juzjānī, Tabqāt-i-Nāsirī ed W Nassau Lees (Calcutta, 1864) pp 381, 397 and Minhāj-ud-Dīn Tabakāt-i-Nāsirī Minhāj-ud-Dīn, Abū-ʿUmar-i-Usmān (London, 1881) pp 1110, 1145-46.

2 Rashīd al-Dīn, Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh, Tarikh-i-Moubarek-i Ghazani, histoire des Mongols, editee par E Blochet (Gibb Memorial Series, Vol XVIII) (London, 1911) pp 173-74, 188

3 Abu'l-Ghāzi. (op cit) tome II, p 159.

But even now the ascendancy of Islam was not assured, for Būzun who was Khān in the next decade—the chronology is uncertain—drove Tarmāshīrīn from his throne, and persecuted the Muslims[1], and it was not until some years later that we hear of the first Musalman King of Kāshgar, which the break-up of the Chaghatāy dynasty had erected into a separate kingdom. This prince, Tuqlūq Tīmūr Khān (1347-1363), is said to have owed his conversion to a holy man from *Bukhārā*, by name *Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn*. This Shaykh, in company with a number of travellers, had unwittingly trespassed on the game-preserves of the prince, who ordered them to be bound hand and foot and brought before him. In reply to his angry question, how they had dared interfere with his hunting, the Shaykh pleaded that they were strangers and were quite unaware that they were trespassing on forbidden ground. *Learning* that they were Persians, the prince said that a dog was worth more than a Persian. 'Yes,' replied the Shaykh, 'if we had not the true faith, we should indeed be worse than the dogs.' Struck with his reply, the Khān ordered this bold Persian to be brought before him on his return from hunting, and taking him aside asked him to explain what he meant by these words and what was 'faith'. The Shaykh then set before him the doctrines of Islam with such fervour and zeal that the heart of the Khān that before had been hard as a stone was melted like wax, and so terrible a picture did the holy man draw of the state of unbelief, that the prince was convinced of the blindness of his own errors, but said, 'Were I now to make profession of the faith of Islam, I should not be able to lead my subjects into the true path. But bear with me a little, and when I have entered into the possession of the kingdom of my forefathers, come to me again.' For the empire of Chaghatāy had by this time been broken up into a number of petty princedoms, and it was

1 Ibn Batutah, (op. cit.) tome III, p. 47

many years before Tūqluq Tīmūr succeeded in uniting under his sway the whole empire as before Meanwhile Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn had returned to his home, where he fell dangerously ill · when at the point of death, he said to his son Rashīd al-Dīn, 'Tuqlūq Tīmūr will one day become a great monarch ; fail not to go and salute him in my name and fearlessly remind him of the promise he made me' Some years later, when Tuqlūq Tīmūr had re-won the empire of his fathers, Rashīd al-Dīn made his way to the camp of the Khān to fulfil the last wishes of his father, but in spite of all his efforts he could not gain an audience of the Khān. At length he devised the following expedient: One day in the early morning, he began to chant the call to prayers, close to the Khān's tent Enraged at having his slumbers disturbed in this way, the prince ordered him to be brought into his presence, whereupon Rashīd al-Dīn delivered his father's message Tuqlūq Khān was not unmindful of his promise, and said · 'Ever since I ascended the throne I have had it on my mind that I made that promise, but the person to whom I gave the pledge never came Now you are welcome' He then repeated the profession of faith and became a Muslim. 'On that morn the sun of bounty rose out of the east of divine favour and effaced the dark night of unbelief ......"[1]

Certain Turk historians have related the story of Tuqluq Timur's conversion in greater detail and reported the dialogue verbatim between him and Jamāl ud-dīn Tuqluq Timur had enquired, pointing out towards his dog, whether he (Jamāl ud-dīn) was better than the beast. Jamāl ud-dīn calmly replied, "If I pass away from this world with my faith intact, I would be better than the dog, if not, the dog would be better than me." Taken aback by this reply, Tuqlūq Tīmūr asked what he meant by 'faith.' And thus he was eventually led to embrace Islam as related by Arnold It is thus certain that a word uttered by Jamāl ud-dīn in all

1. Arnold, pp. 234-36

sincerity was the ultimate cause of the conversion of Tuqluq Timur and of the spread of Islam in his realm: a feat which could not have perhaps been accomplished by a thousand speeches or the might of arms

Turning to the spread of Islam among that branch of the Golden Horde which was succeeded by Ogotāy, the third son of Chenghiz Khan, and under which Kubilay Khan later brought the whole of China, Arnold says:

> "Scattered up and down throughout the length and breadth of the Mongol empire, there must have been many of the followers of the Prophet who laboured successfully and unknown, to win unbelievers to the faith. In the reign of Ogotāy (1229-1241), we read of a certain Buddhist governor of Persia, named Kurguz, who in his later years abjured Buddhism and became a Musalman.[1] In the reign of Tīmūr Khān (1323-1328), Ānanda, a grandson of Qūbilāy and viceroy of Kan-Su, was a zealous Musalman and had converted a great many persons in Tangut and won over a large number of the troops under his command to the same faith He was summoned to court and efforts were made to induce him to conform to Buddhism, and on his refusing to abandon his faith he was cast into prison But he was shortly after set at liberty, for fear of an insurrection among the inhabitants of the Tangut,[2] who were much attached to him."[3]

In this way Islam won over, in a short time, its most inveterate enemy who had trampled underfoot the entire Islamic world, and whose onslaught, for a time, no Muslim power was able to withstand Islam again proved that it possessed an irresistible charm which can captivate the hearts of its bitterest foe. The Mongols, after accepting the faith of Islam, produced a large number of

1. C d' Ohsson, (op cit), Vol III, p. 121
2. Rashid al-Dīn, (op cit), pp 600-602
3. Arnold p 227

scholars, theologians and doctors of faith as well as those who fought for the cause of God, and served to defend Islam on many a critical occasion Iqbāl has rightly said:

> "A sign manifest did adduce the charge of Tartar hordes,
> That defenders ere flock to Kaʿabah from the heathen brutes."[1]

1 *Bāng-i-Dara*, p 230.

CHAPTER XIII

MAULANA JALAL UD-DIN RUMI

The Crisis of Rationalism:

By the time the seventh century of the Muslim era began, dialectics had come to occupy such a pride of place among the religious sciences that nobody could lay a claim to scholarship unless he had mastered the controversial issues between the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites, on the one hand, and between the Ash'arites and the Hanbalites, on the other. Fakhr ud-din al-Razi, who died in 606 A H, had attracted all minds so powerfully that the human intellect had come to be acknowledged by all as the infallible touchstone for the verification of metaphysical truths A compromise between reason and faith, which was regarded as the ultimate end by the scholars of the time, had made them so fond of ratiocination that no religious dogma or tenet of faith was acceptable to them unless it could be established by rational arguments, logical syllogism and philosophical premises

It is true that the Ash'arites had succeeded in building up a powerful system of Islamic scholasticism which gained the day against *'ilm-i-kalam* and philosophy but they had, nevertheless, imbibed the spirit of these sciences The system of metaphysical theology evolved by the Ash'arites had a deep rationalistic foundation which allowed reason to delve into the questions relating to the nature and attributes of God and to discuss metaphysical issues as freely as did the Philosophers and Mu'tazilites As a consequence, naturally, they had also come to regard the conceptual data furnished by the human senses as the most reliable criterion for verification of certitude They had thus accepted logical reasoning and speculative thinking as the cornerstone for building up their

arguments for the affirmation of the religious tenets and finding out the ultimate Reality.

The religious scholars throughout the Islamic world had, as a result, been seized by an excessive formalism of dialectics, which, too, had by then deteriorated into a stale science handed down from generation to generation without any addition or modification. It had been unable to produce for quite a long time a celebrated thinker like Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari or Abū Hamid al-Ghazali. The constant engagement of the then scholars with polemics and logical disputation might have made them bright and quick-witted but it had certainly extinguished the warmth of their hearts and dimmed the light of faith and conviction. The dialecticians had undoubtedly been successful in silencing their opponents by their superior syllogism but they were unable to provide an unflinching conviction which could replace scepticism by faith and disquietude by peace of mind. As a matter of fact, the logical reasoning employed by the dialecticians had given rise to numerous questions which could never be adequately met by the scholastics Also, the dialectics had no place for 'intution' which is an invaluable source for acquisition of knowledge, for, it either did not recognise any 'inner sense' beyond the normal senses of perception or treated it with contempt Obviously, therefore, facts pertaining to mysteries of mute reality and ecstasy were being contended simply because these were beyond the ken of senses; the scholars had developed a predisposition for rejecting or at least being sceptical about everything which could not be proved through rational arguments. The *Ummat*, having thus been seized by the so-called rationalism, was losing that fervour of faith which had been bequeathed to it by the Apostles and the elects of God, and which constituted a fountain-head of its strength for all times to come. Philosophical discourses and dialectical argumentations had turned the people into academicians as dry as dust, lacking that warmth of feeling and certitude of knowledge which is born out of divine intuition. There were, nevertheless, a few sublimated souls, pure of heart and beatified by divine grace; but, the overwhelming majority of the doctors of faith and the laity had become votaries of intellect, fond

so extremely learned that difficult problems pertaining to law and religion were referred to him for solution. His erudition had earned for him the honorific title of *Sultan ul-ʿUlema* (the king of scholars) while he used to hold his assemblies like the courts of monarchs His discourses ran from morning till mid-day for all and sundry, and after the mid-day prayers, for the selected few to whom he expounded the mysteries of the true content of knowledge and faith On Fridays and Mondays he delivered public sermons He had an imposing countenance and always appeared to be engrossed in his thoughts.

Early Education:

Jalal ud-din Rūmi was born on the 6th of Rabi ul-Awwal, 604 A H Baha' ud-din Veled entrusted him to the care of one of his disciples, Saiyid Burhan ud-din, for early education who taught him for four or five years in the beginning and then guided him again, after the death of Baha' ud-din Veled, in the secrets of the mystic path

Migration from Balkh:

The popularity of Baha' ud-din Veled and the great number of his disciples and followers had made certain scholars jealous of him In his lectures, he used to declaim publicly against the Greek philosophers and their rationalist followers, who, he said, had thrown the scriptures over their back, and could not, therefore, hope for the blessings of God. These scholars could not, however, harm him as Khwarism Shah was himself a devotee of Baha' ud-din Veled Once the king who had come to pay a visit to the Sheikh remarked, "What a big crowd has gathered here!" One of the scholars present at the moment readily added, "Yes, and if something is not done to check his popularity, it might become difficult for the King to rule over them" Khwarism Shah took the remark to his heart and asked the scholar as to what should be done in the matter The courtier, seizing the opportunity to malign the Sheikh, advised the king to send the keys of the treasury and also of the citadel to Baha' ud-din Veled with a

message that since he already reigned over the hearts of the people, it would be better if he had the keys as well.[1]

When this message was conveyed to Baha᾿ ud-din Veled, he replied, "Convey my respects to the King and tell him that I am a recluse having nothing to do with the treasures and arms. I would willingly leave the country so that the king may rule over it without any misgivings on this score. I would leave the town on Friday after delivering the last sermon."

The inhabitants of Balkh were so much agitated at the news of Baha᾿ ud-din's departure that the Khwarism Shah had to come along with his vizier to dissuade him from his intended migration. Baha᾿ ud-din Veled, however, did not accede to the request made by the King who ultimately proposed that in order to avoid any tumult or agitation among the masses, Baha᾿ ud-din might leave the city without letting people know of it. Baha᾿ ud-din agreed to the suggestion. He delivered his last sermon on Friday and quitted Balkh on the succeeding Saturday. In his public discourse he warned the King that the Tartar hordes would invade his kingdom soon after his departure.[2]

The people everywhere on his way, hearing of his arrival,

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1 A number of historians have attributed this conversation with the King to Imām Fakhr ud-dīn Rāzi. Cadi Talammuz Husain, however, holds it to be a mistake on the part of chroniclers, for Baha᾿ ud-din Veled left Balkh in 609 or 610 A. H. while Fakhr ud-dīn Rāzi died at Herat in 606 A. H., where he had been residing before he died. (*Sahib ul-Mathnavi*, pp. 46/48) Another biographer of Jalal ud-dīn Rūmi, Badi Uz-zaman Farozanfar, whose book entitled "The life of Maulana Jalal ud-dīn Muhammad" has been published recently in Iran, also subscribes to the abovementioned view of Talammuz Husain. (Farozanfar, p. 14)

Talammuz Husain has expressed the view that this man might have been Saiyid Baha᾿ ud-dīn Rāzi who was a courtier of Khwarism Shah, and who has been mentioned in the Tabqāt-i-Nāsiri (pp. 270/71)

2 Badi Uz-zaman Farozanfar has expressed the view that it is possible that the real cause of Baha᾿ ud-dīn Veled's migration was the impending danger of Tartar invasion of Khurasān and Iran since many other *ulema* and notable persons were then leaving these countries for other places of safety. (Farozanfar, p. 15)

flocked to meet him and bring him into their cities with honour. Thus he passed through Baghdad, Mecca, Damascus and reached Malatia,[1] where he remained for four years, engaged in preaching and teaching. From Malatia, Baha᾽ ud-dīn Veled went on to Āk Shahr,[2] and from there to Larenda[3] which was a dependency of Konya.[4]

Arrival in Konya:

ʿAla ud-dīn Kaikabād, the then Sultan of Rūm[5], sent for and requested Baha᾽ ud-dīn Veled to come to his Capital, where he arrived in 626 A. H. The Sultan himself went to receive Baha᾽ ud-dīn and became his disciple along with his chiefs. In Konya, Baha᾽ ud-dīn resided in a local college and died there after two years in 628 A. H.

Rūmi accompanied his father throughout the latter's journey from Balkh, and he was 22 years of age when he arrived at Konya. Impressed by Baha᾽ ud-dīn's profound knowledge and erudition, the Sultan's teacher, Badr ud-dīn Gohartash, founded a college named Madarsa-i-Khudavandgār for him and endowed it richly for its maintenance.[6]

Sultan ʿAla ud-dīn Kaikabād had a great regard for Baha᾽ ud-dīn Veled When the Sultan had erected the fort of Konya he invited Baha᾽ ud-dīn Veled to mount to the terraced roof of the fort, thence to survey the walls and towers. After his inspection, Baha᾽ ud-dīn remarked to the Sultan, "Against the floods and enemy horses, you have raised a goodly defence But what protection have you built against those unseen arrows, the sighs and moans of the oppressed, which pass through a thousand walls and battlements, and sweep whole worlds to destruction. Go and erect a citadel of justice and equity, for that alone can ensure

1 A city on the Upper Euphrates
2 Capital of a province of Konya
3 A city in Asia Minor
4. i e Iconium in Galatia
5. i e. Anatolia in modern Turkey
6. Aflāki, p 30

the peace of the world."[1]

After the death of Baha' ud-dīn Veled, Rūmi was raised to occupy the seat of his father by the Sultan of Konya on the advice of the scholars and disciples of the departed teacher. Rūmi thus started teaching in the college and preaching to the people in place of his father. Later, Saiyid Burhan ud-dīn, the tutor during his childhood, who had migrated to Tirmiz came back to Konya. Rūmi received instruction in the mystic lore from Saiyid Burhan ud-dīn who lived in Konya for nine years and died there in 637 A. H.

Travels for further Education:

In 630 A. H. Rūmi went forth to Syria for further education. He arrived at Haleb (Aleppo) where Sultan al-Malik al-Zāhir[2] had established, on the advice of Cadi Baha' ud-dīn ibn Shaddād, several colleges in 591 A. H., which had made Haleb also a reputed place of learning like Damascus.

In Haleb Rūmi stayed in Madarsa Halāwiyah and received education from Kamāl ud-dīn ibn al-ʿAdīm.[3] Although Rūmi was receiving education at Haleb, difficult juristic questions were referred to him for solution. Sipah Salār reports that Rūmi not only furnished a solution to all such problems but also gave reasons which were not to be found in any book.

Rūmi went to Damascus from Haleb and dwelt in Madarsa Maqdasyah. In Damascus, reports Sipah Salār, Rūmi used to confer with Sheikh Mohi ud-dīn ibn ʿArabi, Sheikh Saʿad ud-dīn Hamawi, Sheikh ʿUthman Rūmi, Sheikh Auhad ud-dīn Kirmāni and Sheikh Sadr ud-dīn Konwi.[4]

In 634 or 635 A. H. Rūmi returned to Konya and resumed the profession of teaching. He continued to do so till the death of his mentor, Saiyid Burhan ud-dīn, in 637 A. H. Soon thereafter, Sheikh Mohi ud-dīn ibn ʿArabi died in Damascus in 638 A. H., and a number of scholars and mystics moved on from Damascus

1 Aflāki, p. 37.
2 Son of Sultan Salah ud-dīn
3. Sipah Salār, p. 16 and Aflāki, p. 52
4 Sipah Salār, p. 14

to seek the company of Rūmi in Konya. Sheikh Sadr ud-dīn and a large number of other scholars whose hearths and homes had been destroyed by the Mongols were too seeking refuge in Konya which had thus attracted quite a large number of celebrated scholars and doctors of faith reputed for their learning and piety. Rūmi, still busy in teaching at the Madarsa, where he is reported to have more than 400 students under his tutelage, was head and shoulders above all the other scholars.

The other pursuits of Rūmi, besides teaching, were preaching in meetings held for the purpose and giving juristic-opinion on the questions referred to him. Fifteen *Dinars* were fixed for him, it is reported, as a remuneration for this public service. He was so particular in this regard that he had instructed his attendants to inform him immediately on the receipt of questions eliciting juristic-opinion, even if he were in a devotional seclusion or trance, and take the dictation for sending a reply.

Rūmi Turns to Mysticism:

Rūmi spent his days in this manner till 642 A. H when an incident completely transformed his life and turned him from Jalāl ud-dīn Konwi to Maulana-i-Rūm. This was his meeting with Shamsh Tebrez and his devotion and adoration of the latter. The Maulana has himself said:

"The lord of Rūm did not become a learned sage;
Until he had become a bondsman of Shamsh Tebrez."

Shamsh Tebrez:

Muhammad ibn ʿAli ibn Malik Dād was his name but he was commonly known as Shamsh Tebrez. His ancestry is shrouded in mystery and the place to which he belonged is also not known with certainty. Of the many charges levelled against him, one was that he belonged to an unknown descent[1] It was said of him that:

"Who is he and what his father was?
Does anybody know? Er, he comes from where?"

1 A few historians consider him to be the son of Jalāl ud-dīn Hasan, a pontiff of the Ismailiyah sect, who renounced the cult of the famous

He is reported to have been gifted with a keen intellect and a fervour of love since his very childhood It has been related in *Manāqib al-ʿArifin*[1] that while still young, he often remained so immersed in the love for the Prophet that he did not feel the pangs of hunger for as many as thirty to forty days[2] After he had mastered the exoteric sciences he became a disciple of Sheikh Abū Bakr, the basket maker Some chroniclers report that he had taken Sheikh Zain ud-dīn Sanjāsi[3] as his spiritual mentor while the names of certain other mystics have been mentioned in other reports. May be he received a grounding in the mystic lore from all these from time to time

Not content with the esoteric teachings of "the Path" he has had from his tutors, Shamsh Tebrez took to extensive travels in various lands, in search of the best spiritual teacher and thus gained the nickname of *Paranda* (the Flier, Bird, etc). In his travels he took care to conceal his own spiritual attainments. Pretending to be a wealthy merchant, he wore a black felt and always bolted the doors of his room in the inn, with a costly lock, although there was nothing inside except a tattered mat He travelled in this way to Tebrez, Baghdad, Jordan, Rome, Qaisaryah and Damascus He used to weave strings with which trousers are fastened, and this was enough to meet his frugal expenses He lived for one year in Damascus where he did not take more than a cup of soup once a week[4] Often he prayed to God for a companion

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"Assassins" and adopted the orthodox faith He was accordingly known as a *Nau-Muslim* (the recently converted Muslim) These reports are, however of doubtful authenticity For detailed study *see*, "The Life of Maulana Jalal ud-din Muhammad" (pp 53-54) by Badi Uz-zaman Farozanfar and *Sahib ul-Mathnavi* (pp 127-128) by Cadi Talammuz Husain

1 Written by Shamsh ud-dīn Ahmad al-Aflāki in 752 A H

2 Aflāki, p 370

3 Ferozanfar has given the name of his mentor as Rukn ud-din Sunjāsi instead of Zain ud-dīn Sanjāsi He also says that Sanjās was a dependency of Zanjān but he is not sure about it (Farozanfar, p 56)

4 Sipah Salār, p 63

with whom he could share the mysteries of divine love.[1]

Meeting of Shamsh Tebrez and Rūmi :

The spiritual mentor of Shamsh Tebrez, it is related, asked him to proceed to Rūm and illuminate a broken-hearted soul yearning for the divine love. He accordingly reached Konya on the 26th of Jamadi ul-Ākhir, 642 A. H. and engaged a lodging in an inn. One day, he saw Rūmi coming by, riding on a mule, in the midst of a crowd of students and disciples accompanying him on foot. Shamsh Tebrez stepped forward and asked Rūmi, "What is the object of learning and prayer ?" "It is to know," replied Rūmi, "the *Shari'ah* and its tenets." "No", rejoined Shamsh Tebrez, "the object is to attain what is knowable". Thereafter he recited this couplet of Hakīm Sinãi :

"Compared to that knowledge, ignorance is better ;
Which allows your self to remain as it were."

Rūmi was lost in amazement. He had taken to heart the remark of Shamsh Tebrez.[2]

Rūmi now took Shamsh Tebrez home with him. They remained closeted together, reports Aflāki, for forty days where no body could enter.[3] Sipah Salār, another biographer of Rūmi, writes that both remained in holy communion for six months in a room where none dared to enter except Sheikh Salah ud-dīn.[4]

The company of Shamsh Tebrez opened a new vista of the hidden realm to the view of Rūmi who now felt a trenchant urge to grasp the mysteries of earth and of heaven through spiritual

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1 Aflāki, pp 58-59

2 The conversation between Rūmi and Shamsh Tebrez has been reported in Tarikh Daulat Shah The author of the Life of Jalāl ud-dīn Muhammad has also collected all the traditions in this regard but none being acceptable to him, he has put forth the view that the attachment of Rūmi to Shamsh Tebrez was not due to any sudden rapturous infactuation but because Rūmi was already in search of an illuminated soul (Farozanfar, pp 61-68) Also see *Sahib ul-Mathnavi*, pp 139-142

3 Aflāki, p 60

4 Sipah Salār, p 66

illumination Rūmi says in a couplet:

"Shamsh Tebrez was it, who led me to the path of Reality;
For the faith I have is simply his bounty."

Rūmi had so long been a profound scholar and a successful teacher, disciples and students, many of them scholars and mystics, always gathered round him in large numbers to drink at the fountain of learning, but, now, he himself became a pupil of Shamsh Tébrez Sultan Veled, the son of Rūmi says.

"The Sheikh himself turned a probationer,
He began to learn his lessons afresh, sitting at the feet of his mentor.
Although perfect he was in ascetic lore,
He had to begin taking lessons once more"

Rūmi has also acknowledged it in these lines

"A mendicant I was, thou madest me a liberatine,
A source of tumult, intoxicated with wine
Revered I was as a doctor of religion,
Thou hast turned me into a sport for children."

The result was that Rūmi abandoned teaching as well as sermonising He says

"Like Mercury had I ledgers of mine,
Upon which I devoted much time,
Lo! no sooner did I glance the forehead of the cupbearer,
So intoxicated I became that I broke my pen"

Tumult by Rūmi's Disciples:

After Rūmi had entered the enchanted circle of Shamsh Tebrez's spiritual powers, he gave up teaching and delivering lectures which was intensely resented by his followers, disciples and friends They, accordingly, raised a fearful and threatening tumult against Shamsh The resentment of Rūmi's disciples was kindled by the respect paid to Snamsh by Rūmi, and they were also jealous that an unknown person whose lineage and even whereabouts were not known to anybody should cause their revered

teacher to severe all relations with those who had so long been serving as well as deriving benefit from him, and spreading his fame far and wide. The disciples and followers of Rūmi took Shamsh Tebrez for a weired figure who had cast a spell over Rūmi otherwise he would not have changed so suddenly and decided not to see his old acquaintances. They could not express their resentment against Shamsh in the presence of Rūmi but whenever they got an opportunity they jibbed and stingingly reproached Shamsh Tebrez.

Departure of Shamsh Tebrez:

Shamsh Tebrez calmly put up with the irritation caused by Rūmi's followers for some time but when he found that they were bent upon taking resort to violent means, he stealthily left Konya one day Aflāki reports that Shamsh Tebrez left Konya, at the end of his first visit, on Thursday, the twenty-first day of the month of Shawwal, 643 A.H.,[1] after a stay of about sixteen months.

The departure of Shamsh Tebrez left Rūmi in such a state of distress and depression that he completely cut himself off from all the disciples and acquaintances, friends and relatives. This was an unexpected turn of events unforseen by those who had been envious of Shamsh, for Rūmi was now not prepared to see even those who had not opposed Shamsh, much less the persons who had been his adversaries

Return of Shamsh Tebrez:

Sipah Salār relates that Rūmi remained cut off from every body till he unexpectedly received a letter from Shamsh Tebrez from Damascus.[2] A bit calmed down, Rūmi now permitted those who had not pitted themselves against Shamsh to join in his sittings It was during this period that Rūmi began to take part in musical chantings in remembrance of his lost friend. He also wrote four letters to Shams Tebrez during this period of separation,

1. Aflāki, p 60
2 *Ibid*, p 66

which express his intense desire to see Shamsh again In the first letter he says

"Come back to me, the light of my heart, the object of my desire
Thou forges ahead with the fervour of thy true love.
If thou comest, the joy of my heart shall I acquire
If not, extreme depression will be my hire
Thou art like the sun, which is far away but still near,
Come back, Oh, thou art at a distance, but I find thee here."

Gradually the antagonism against Shamsh Tebrez subsided and then Rūmi took steps to invite him back to Konya again He sent his son, Sultan Veled, to bear a letter to Shamsh Tebrez and assure him on behalf of his disciples and followers that all of them, who had earlier opposed him, were repenting their mistake and wanted to be forgiven Rūmi's letter to Shamsh expresses his heart-felt grief over the separation with his spiritual guide He wrote

"From the time thou hast departed from me, as wax is separated from honey,
Like a candle I melt in the fire of love, deprived of thy sweetness,
Separated from thy illustrious self, I have been turned into a ruin,
Wherein my soul resides alone in wilderness
Turn the reins of thy mount, I implore, turn the mount of thy joy (this way),
For music is not lawful unto me in thy absence, I hate the joy as a devil
Not a single ode could I indite, till a letter to me did ye write
To read thy letter, I was so over-joyed; lyrics I composed six or five
O' God, let us meet again to turn my eve into morn,
For thou art indeed the pride of Syria, Armenia and Rome."

Sultan Veled conducted Shamsh Tebrez to Konya from Damascus like a prince

Shamsh Tebrez Departs again:

Rūmi was overjoyed to see Shamsh Tebrez for the second time. All those who had been discourteous to Shamsh requested him to condone their mistakes. For a time Shamsh and Rūmi passed their time happily in spiritual and religious disquisitions, divine manifestations and ecstasies, and the fervour of Rūmi's love for Shamsh increasing with the passage of time. However, Rūmi's disciples began to resent again their neglect by Rūmi, as they had done before Another incident happened in the meantime which added fuel to the fire. Shamsh was putting up with his wife in an outer room of the house in which Rūmi dwelt. Chelebi ʿAlaʾ ud-dīn, the son of Rūmi by his second wife, used to pass through the room of Shamsh, whenever he visited his father, and thus caused inconvenience to the Sheikh. Shamsh politely asked ʿAlaʾ ud-dīn on several occasions not to do so which was, however, resented by him ʿAlaʾ ud-dīn also viewed with jealousy the affection showed by Shamsh Tebrez to his step-brother, Sultan Veled, and, therefore, he gave vent to his feelings before such followers of Rūmi as were inimical to Shamsh. They immediately seized the opportunity to malign Shamsh Tebrez and again raised a storm of protest against him.

Shamsh Tebrez did not, at first, mention the matter to Rūmi but when the hostilities of these people increased, he alluded to his embarrassment in the form of an anecdote. He also hinted that this time he would slip away without leaving any trace of him. It appears from certain verses of Rūmi that he was not completely unaware of what was going to happen, for he had entreated Shamsh Tebrez in some of his verses to give up the idea of deserting him again.

However, the followers of Rūmi again rose in opposition to Shamsh with the result that he slipped away from Konya.[1]

1. It has been mentioned in certain chronicles that Shamsh was put to death by certain persons in Konya and Rūmi, on receiving the news said, "God

Rūmi says in a couplet:

"That there be no room for any complaint, Suddenly he set out to quit them all"

Rūmi's Impatience:

When Rūmi found Shamsh missing again one morning, his distress knew no bounds He immediately went to Sultan Veled and cried out, "Sleepest thou, Get up and find out where the Sheikh is? I find my soul devoid of his fragrance again."[1]

Now Rūmi again started his search for Shamsh, he was now even more distressed than he had been earlier. He ceased all intercourse with those who had caused ill-will to Shamsh and even forbade them to appear before him Rūmi says:

"The separation made him mad in love,
Like Jonah he became, without a hearth or home."

A few days later when his quest for Shamsh had proved fruitless, Rūmi became even more restless Now he spent most of his time either in listening to the musical recitals or lamenting and raising a wail of woe for the departed companion It was during this period that Rūmi composed a number of beautiful and extremely touching lyrics expressing the agonising pangs suffered by him due to Shamsh's seperation

This was the year 645 A H Rūmi was extremely anxious for Shamsh specially because of the disturbed conditions in Egypt and Asia Minor and the tempest of rapine and slaughter let loose by the Tartar invasion. If anybody gave him the whereabouts of Shamsh, Rūmi would be so pleased that he immediately rewarded him with whatever he could lay his hands upon including even the garments he wore at the time

does what He likes and orders whatever He intends" Farozanfar, however, prefers the version that Rūmi was nearest to Shamsh, and, naturally, he should have been aware of what had happened to Shamsh Thus, had Shamsh been killed in Konya, Rūmi would not have undertaken the journey to Damascus in his quest (Farozanfar, pp 83-84)

1. Sipah Salār, p 69

Travels to Syria:

Not being able to calm down his restlessness, Rūmi set out for Damascus along with a few of his other companions in search of Shamsh Tebrez. He was received with honour by the scholars of Damascus but they were surprised to learn that a person of his intellectual stature and erudition should be so agitated for any individual.

Rūmi could not, however, get any trace of Shamsh Tebrez in Damascus When he was worn out of his quest for Shamsh, he remarked, "Myself and Shamsh are not two If he is like the sun, I am a particle, if he is an ocean, I am a drop, for the particle is illuminated by the sun and the drop owes its existence to the ocean. There is thus no difference between Shamsh and myself." Rūmi returned to Konya from Damascus but his restlessness did not abate. After a couple of years he again undertook a journey to Damascus but he returned this time convinced that in reality he was himself Shamsh and that all his search for Shamsh was no more than a quest to find out his own self

After coming back from Damascus for the second time, Rūmi gave up all hopes to meet Shamsh Tebrez again. Nevertheless, Rūmi now experienced the same effulgence of spiritual wisdom streaming in his own self which he had sought in Shamsh Tebrez. "Although the Maulana, on whom be the blessings of God", says Sultan Veled, "failed to find out the person of Shamsh ud-din Tebrez, whose fame may be spread by God, in Damascus, he found whatever he wanted from Shamsh, percolating in his own veins".

Sheikh Salah ud-dīn, the gold-beater.

A few days after his return from Damascus for the second time, Rūmi again became restless He now promoted Sheikh Salah ud-din as his confidant and chief assistant He was, in fact, elevated to take the place of Shamsh Tebrez,[1] as Sultan Veled says

1 Farozanfar writes "When Rūmi became despaired of finding out Shamsh, he turned his mind towards Salah ud-din whole-heartedly He nominated him as his Sheikh and Caliph and appointed him as the leader of the

in these verses:

"After Shamsh, Salah ud-dīn became his helper in this design:
His presence increased the illuminations and visions Divine,
For he learnt the lore mysterious from him."

Sheikh Salah ud-dīn came of a poor family belonging to a nearby village. His father was a fisherman while Salah ud-dīn had himself taken up the profession of gold-beating. Reputed as a trustworthy youngman from his early days, he had been a disciple of Saiyid Burhān ud-dīn. After Saiyid Burhān ud-dīn's death he took the oath of allegiance to Rūmi whose closest associate he remained during the last ten years of his life. He died on the first of Muharram, 657 A. H.

Elevation of Salah ud-dīn as the most trusted disciple and spiritual successor of Rūmi, again made his other disciples and followers run amuck. Now their complaint was that Shamsh was at least an educated person but this man, who was a mere gold-beater by profession, did not deserve to be the chief assistant of their respected teacher. They were amazed to see that Rūmi held Salah ud-dīn in such a high esteem, and this fired their envy again. However, when Salah ud-dīn came to know of the tumult among other disciples he remarked: "They deplore my selection as the chief associate of the Maulana but they don't appear to understand that the Maulana is really in love with his own self. I simply act as a veil to conceal this fact."[1]

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seekers of God and instructed his friends and disciples to obey him" (Farozanfar, p. 101)

1 Farozanfar writes: The Maulana being tired of the blind envy of the malicious detractors of Salah ud-dīn, made him the cynosure of his eyes and showed him the same love and affection which he had for Shamsh. As Salah ud-dīn had been a soft-hearted man, his attraction and guidance were of a different nature. He was able to decrease the tumultous restlessness of the Maulana to a large extent. (Farozanfar, pp. 102-103)

Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn:

After the death of Salah ud-dīn, Chelebi[1] Hisām ud-dīn Turk was nominated by Rūmi to act as his chief assistant, confidant and spiritual vicegerent in place of the deceased friend. Chelebi Hisām ud-din had already occupied a distinguished place among the followers of Rūmi, and for eleven years after the demise of his spiritual superior, he acted as his successor He was a Turk belonging to Armenia and came of a respectable and influential family known as Akhi.[2]

Hisām ud-dīn had also paid obeisance to Shamsh Tebrez and Salah ud-dīn from whom he had learnt the esoteric teachings

Hisām ud-dīn spent all his belongings on Rūmi and ultimately emancipated his slaves as well He was so cautious that he never used the water of the Maulana's bath-room for ablutions out of respect for him, and went to his own house for the purpose even if it was biting cold On the other hand, Rūmi too paid such a homage to Hisām ud-dīn that one thought him to be a disciple of the latter[3]

Composition of the Mathnawi:

The Mathnawi was composed by Rūmi during this period at the instance of Hisām ud-dīn[4]

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1 Chelebi is an equivalent of Saiyid in Turkish language (Farozanfar, p 111).

2 Farozanfar says that Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn was born in 622 A H (Farozanfar, p 111)

3 Rūmi sent whatever presents he received to Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn Once Sultan Veled complained about it but Rūmi replied, "By God, if a hundred-thousand pious men were caught by trouble and it were apprehended that the world would perish, and I had only a loaf with me, I would send even that to the respected Chelebi." Rūmi used to keep silence whenever Hisām ud-dīn was not present in his meetings His followers, therefore, always tried to cause Hisām ud-dīn to be present in these meetings (Farozanfar, p. 114)

4 Farozanfar writes that the Mathnawi was composed by Rūmi on the request of Hisām ud-dīn The latter had noticed the disciples and followers of Rūmi devoting their time to the study of *Hadiqa* of Sanāī and the *Mantaqut Tayr* of ʿAttār because they could not find mystical lores in the odes of Rūmi

The fact is that Rūmi was endowed with a love so fervent and rapturous that he could not do without a close companion and confidant with whom he could share the mysteries of the esoteric truth experienced by him First, he selected Shamsh Tebrez whose place was taken by Salah ud-dīn and Hisām ud-dīn one after another. Saiyid Burhan ud-dīn was also elevated to his circle of selected associates, although in a different capacity, for a short while. The period of five years between the death of Saiyid Burhan ud-dīn and the arrival of Shamsh Tebrez in Konya was spent by Rūmi in such a way as if he felt some deficiency in his life It is obvious that the latent capabilities with which Rūmi had been endowed required a stimulant for their expression The Mathnawi is itself a proof of Rūmi's yearning for love, if one is required, for it would not have come into existence without the spiritual fervour aroused by Rūmi's favourite associates There had been a gap of two years in the compilation of the Mathnawi when Rūmi suspended its composition on account of the Hisām ud-dīn's grief at the death of his wife

Perfection in the 'Path' of mysticism or spiritual illumination was not the reason for selection of his confidants by Rūmi He often said that love is born out of affinity. Once, in reply to a

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which, nevertheless, displayed his fervour of love He, therefore, sought and found an opportunity to propose that Rūmi might indite something in the style of the above mentioned lyrics Rūmi immediately produced a paper from his turban on which were written 18 verses, the first of which was to become the opening verse of the Mathnawi It ran as follows

"From reed flute hear what tale it tells,
What plaint it makes of absence ills,"

And, the last verse ran

"Now ends my discourse, peace be to ye "

Rūmi used to dictate the verses to Hisām ud-dīn who took them down and then recited these aloud in his beautiful voice Often they spent whole nights at the task After the first part of the Mathnawi was completed Hisām ud-dīn's wife died which made him very despondent Rūmi too felt so aggrieved by the dejection of Hisām ud-dīn that the composition of Mathnawi was suspended for two years Thereafter, Rūmi again took up the task continuing it for the next fifteen years till his death (Farozanfar, pp 116-118)

question he told his son, Sultan Veled, that he cultivated friendship with his associates because of affinity, for the affection born out of it never leads one to remorse. True affinity or love, explained Rūmi, would never cause repentance either in this world or the Hereafter. Those who cultivate friendship for selfish ends would, in the Hereafter, languish with a longing described thus by the Qur'ān: *Alas for me! Ah, would that I had never taken such an one for friend.*[1] On the other hand, those who are sincere and fear God shall retain their friendship. *Friends on that day will be foes one to another, save those who kept their duty (to Allah).*[2]

Rumi has expressed the same view in a verse which says.

"Never from miracles, a faith sprouts;
Yet, qualities alike, affinity unites"

Death of Rūmi:

Sipah Salār relates that Konya was continuously rocked by earthquakes for forty days before the death of Rūmi[3] Aflāki, however, says that while Rūmi still lay in sickness, there were severe earthquakes for seven days and nights, until everyone in Konya was greatly alarmed. When the people went to Rūmi to beseech his help, he calmly remarked: "Poor earth, it is starving and wants a fat morsel. It shall soon have one and then it won't bother you."[4] During his last illness, he indited an ode which has the following opening lines:

"Despite thy kindness and affection, (my) heart craves for anger from thee.
Like a glass fragile, break my heart by saying: 'Thou canst not see me."

Chelebi Hisām ud-din says that Sheikh Sadr ud-din along with a few other mendicants paid a visit to Rūmi during his last illness During the course of their conversation he said, "May God grant you speedy recovery." "No", replied Rūmi, "There is only a

1. *Al-Furqān* 28
2. *Az-Zukhruf* 67
3 Sipah Salār p 58
4. Aflāki. p 350

hair's-breadth distance between the lover and the beloved. Won't you like that this distance should also vanish and the finite spirit may unite with the Infinite One?"

Rūmi dictated the following ode during his illness to Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn:

"Go! head on pillow lay; alone, in peace, me leave,
Loved tyrant, plague by night, while all around thee grieve
That peerless beauty (God) has no need kind care to show,
But, sallow lovers, ye must patient faith still know
Perplexity is ours to bear, 'tis his to own hard heart,
Shed he our blood, 'what sin? He'll not pay murderer's smart
To die's hard, after all, but remedy there's none,
How, then, to crave a remedy? The evil's done
Last night, in dream, a warder, from my love's abode,
Made sign to me, and said 'This way! Held thou my lode'"[1]

Rūmi died, at the age of sixty-eight years and three months, at the close of the day on the fifth of Jamadi-ul-Ākhir 672 A. H.[2]

When his corpse was brought forth, a great multitude swarmed the place, all of whom smote their breasts and raised loud lamentations Jews and Christians came reading their own scriptures The Muslims strove to drive them away but they would not be repelled. It was feared, at length, that a tumult would break out The intelligence was conveyed to Parwana,[3] who asked the Rabbis and Bishops why they mixed themselves up with the funeral of a Muslim saint. They replied that they had found in him all the signs and virtues of the prophets described in their scriptures and have learnt the ways of the sages and saints of yore, than they had ever known before They were all ultimately allowed to

1 Redhouse - p 95

2 Sipah Salār p 59

3 Moin ud-din Parwana, the governor of Konya

accompany the funeral The number of people who flocked to join the funeral procession was so great that the bier taken out early in the morning could reach the burial place by sun-set, and thus with all honours, the luminous sage was laid to rest in his grave

The Character of Rūmi:

Shibli writes in the *Sawāneh* (Biography) of Maulāna-i-Rūm:

"So long as the Maulāna had not taken to the path of mysticism, he led the life of an eminent scholar and a doctor of faith Whenever he went out, riding on his mule, a large number of students, theologians and even the grandees accompanied him on foot. The kings and chiefs of State received him with highest honour But no sooner did he adopt the mystic way of life, his life was completely transformed He continued to teach and give juristic-opinions, but these vocations appeared to be only reminiscent of his past life, he always seemed to be enchanted with a rapturous love, in transports and trances of a sublimated soul"[1]

Prayers and Penance:

Rūmi was extremely fond of prayers and penance. Siph Salār, who dwelt with him for many years, relates that he never saw Rūmi in a night-gown He never had a pillow or a bedding, nor did he ever lie down for taking rest. Whenever he felt drowsy, he took a nap wherever he might be sitting He says in a verse

"Shrouded in a quilt studded with thorn,
How can he sleep, for pricked is always lovelorn."

Whenever he found that his disciples were heavy with sleep, during the musical services, he would rest his head between his knees pretending to have fallen asleep, but after everyone had dropped into slumber, he would get up and occupy himself with the performance of *Zikr* (recollection) and recitation.[2] He has

1 *Sawāneh*: p 34
2 *Ibid*, p 35

alluded to it in one of his odes in which he says

"Everyone slept but not I, for the heart smite my control, outright
My eyes grew accustomed to count the stars, night after night.
Sleep has gone out of my eyes never to return,
It has taken the poison of thy separation and taken to flight"

Prayers of Rūmi:

No sooner had the time for an obligatory prayer arrived then Rūmi was a completely changed man[1] He would immediately turn towards *Kaʿba*, his face turning pale, and he would soon be lost in the prayers Sipah Salār relates that it was not unoften that Rūmi spent the whole night in two *rakʿats* of prayer[2] Rūmi has described in an ode his own condition during the prayers He says:

"After sun-set prayer, one lights the lamp or the meal he takes,
But I am left with sighs and moans for my departed mates.
With tears I perform ablution, my prayer is filled with fire;
A call to prayer thus given, sets the door of mosque ablaze
How very wonderful is the prayer of intoxicated ones;
Say· 'It is flawless', for it transcends the time and space
Perhaps I finished the second *Rakʿat*, or perhaps the fourth;
I know not in fact, what I read or didn't get the time at all
How should I knock the door of Truth; my hands and heart are not mine

1. *Sawānеh*, p 35
2. Sipah Salār, p 21.

A friend like thee has robbed me of the heart: now
God alone can provide shelter.
I know not, by God, when the service ended or who
led the prayer."

Once Rūmi was performing his prayers in a wintry cold night. His tears trickled down his face on the beard, turning the tears into beads of ice owing to the intense cold, but he remained engaged in his prayers without being even aware of it.

Austerity and Contentment:

Of simple habits, austere and frugal, Rūmi led a life of almost primitive simplicity. Whatever presents were received from the king, nobles or other affluent people were passed on by him to Salah ud-dīn or Chelebi Husām ud-dīn although he often had nothing to make both the ends meet for his own dependents. He kept a portion of such presents only on the insistence of his son, Sultan Veled, but he was very much pleased when there was absolutely no provision for subsistence in his own house. On such occasions he used to remark that his house appeared to be the abode of a mendicant.[1]

Generosity:

Rūmi was so generous that he never returned a beggar without giving him something. More than open-handed—he gave away with both hands—he never buttoned his gown or shirt so that it might be easier for him to take it off in case anybody asked for it.

Humility and Tender-heartedness:

Once Rūmi was going somewhere with his disciples He found his way blocked by a dog sleeping in a narrow lane. He stood there waiting but someone made the poor thing get up and clear the lane. Rūmi felt much aggrieved that the poor creature was disturbed in its sleep.[2]

1. *Sawānih*, p 36
2. *Ibid*, p. 39.

On another occasion he found two persons quarrelling and abusing each other He requested both of them to denounce him and bury the hatchet instead of calling names to each other. Both of them fell on his feet and patched up their differences[1]

Lawful Earnings:

Rūmi received a stipend of 15 *Dinars* a month out of the proceeds of charitable trusts Since he did not like to accept a remuneration without doing some work in lieu thereof, he had taken upon himself to give juristic-opinion on religious and legal matters referred to him by the people He was so particular about it that he had instructed his disciples to let him know of the questions referred to him as soon as these were received

Once someone remarked that Sheikh Sadr ud-dīn had a stipend of thousand *Dinars* fixed for him while he got only fifteen *Dinars*. Rūmi at once corrected him by saying that the Sheikh needed even more money and it would have been better if the fifteen *Dinars* fixed for him were also given to the Sheikh[2]

Dislike of Worldliness:

Rūmi hated the rounds of visits frequently paid to him by the king, princes and the nobles. He never liked them to call upon him and sometimes even expressed his distaste to the face of visiting personage. Once a certain grandee who paid a courtesy call to Rūmi, said "Excuse me, Sir, I couldn't pay my respects more frequently owing to other pre-occupations" "You need not be sorry for it", came the reply from Rūmi, "I am more grateful to those who do not call upon me."[3]

The Mathnawi and its Message:

Rūmi had been endowed with a tremendous spiritual enthusiasm and a fervour of love which was lying dormant under the

1. *Sawāneh*, p 39
2 *Ibid*, p 42
3. *Ibid*, p 43

cover of his erudition, particularly of those relating to the speculative branches of secular sciences As soon as Shamsh Tebrez cast his enchanted spell over Rūmi, it would be seen, his spirituality was animated and the outcome was enchanting and beautiful lyrics describing the mysteries of divine love and spiritual raptures, undescribable ecstasies and transports He ultimately attained the stage where, in the words of Iqbāl, he could claim:

"At last flames burst forth from every hair of me,
Fire dropped from the veins of my thought."[1]

It is a state where every sage gives a call with a thousand tongues for a worthy companion:

"Oh, where in the wide world is my comrade?
I am the Bush of Sinai Where is my Moses?"[2]

And this was the reason why Rūmi found it difficult to spend his days without a confidant and companion · his restlessness did not calm down until he found a companion in Salah ud-dīn after Shamsh and in Chelebi Hisām ud-dīn after Salah ud-dīn—verily, it is not easy for the candle to throb alone.[3]

It was this fire of love which led Rūmi to seek spiritual food and energy through musical recitations. He has explained it thus in the Mathnawi ·

> "Therefore *samā*ᶜ (music) is the food of lovers (of God), since therein is the phantasy of composure (tranquillity of mind)
>
> From (hearing) sounds and pipings the mental phantasies gather a (great) strength; nay, they become forms (in the imagination).
>
> The fire of love is made keen (inflamed) by melodies, just as the fire (ardour) of the man who dropped walnuts (into the water)."[4]

1. *Asrar-i-Khudi*, p 88 (Translation by Nicholson, p. 145).
2. *Ibid*, p. 88 (Nicholson, p 144)
3 *Ibid*, p. 88 (Nicholson, p 145).
4 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 313 (Book IV-Verses 742-44).

veracity of revealed truths. Rūmi raised a severe criticism of this view and frowned upon its standard-bearers in these words:

"The doctrine held by the eye of sense is Muʿtazilism, whereas the eye of Reason is Sunnite (orthodox) in respect of (its) union (vision of God).[1]

Those in thrall to sense-perception are Muʿtazilites, (though) from misguidedness they represent themselves as Sunnites.

Any one who remains in (bondage to) sense-perception is a Muʿtazilite; though he may say he is a Sunnite, 'tis from ignorance.

Any one who has escaped from (the bondage of) sense-perception is a Sunnite: the man endowed with (spiritual) vision is the eye of sweet-paced (harmonious) Reason."[2]

Rūmi has asserted at more than one place in the Mathnawi that in addition to the external senses, man has been endowed with certain inner senses too, and that these inner senses are much more wider, potent and sagacious than the outer sense-organs.

"Besides these five (physical) senses there are five (spiritual) senses: those (latter) are like red gold, while these (physical) senses are like copper.

In the bazaar where they (the buyers) are expert, how should they buy the copper sense like (as though it were) the sense of gold?

The bodily sense is eating the food of darkness, the spiritual sense is feeding from a Sun."[3]

If anything cannot be seen or, for that matter, is beyond the awarness of a physical experience, then in Rūmi's view, it is not

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1 What Rūmi means is that those who are blind to spiritual things virtually occupy the position of the Muʿtazilites who denied that it is possible for the Faithful to see God either in this world or the next. From the Sufi standpoint, on the other hand, the real test of faith is the capacity for spiritual vision

2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 225 (Book II-61-64).

3. *Ibid*, Vol II, p 224 (Book II-49-51)

necessarily non-existent. He holds the view that the latent underlies the manifest in the same way as healing properties form the intrinsic quality of a medicine.

> "The unbeliever's argument is just this, that he says, 'I see no place of abode except this external (world).'
>
> He never reflects that, wherever there is anything external, that (object) gives information of hidden wise purposes.
>
> The usefulness of every external object is, indeed, internal: it is latent, like the beneficial quality in medicines"[1]

Rūmi says that the materialists lose their sense of inner cognition and are unable to understand its objectives simply because they cultivate the habit of accepting only the external and manifest In his opinion this signifies lack of foresight on the part of the materialists

> "Since the foolish took (only) the external appearances (into consideration), and (since) the subtleties (inward aspects) were very much hidden from them
>
> Necessarily they were debarred from (attaining to) the (real) object, for the subtlety escaped (them) on the occasion when it (the object) presented itself"[2]

Rūmi proceeds further to censure the intellect as well which, like sense-perception, lacks the capacity to obtain the knowledge of realities revealed by the prophets It really does not possess the ground on which it can base its speculation in such matters nor has it any experiential awareness of the realm hidden from its view

> "What do you know of the waters of Euphrates and Oxus, sweet and pure,
>
> You have taken abode in a pond, salty, rotted and impure"[3]

An intellect which has a dominant carnal reason is a partial or particular intelligence, according to Rūmi, for it breeds doubts and scepticism and its abode is darkness, it brings disgrace to the

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, pp 430-431 (Book IV-2878-80)

2 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 81 (Book V-1331-32)

3 *Ibid*, *Mathnawi Malvi Ma'nawi*, p 96

absolute intelligence and frustration to mankind. Insanity is preferable, indeed, to the sagacity of such an intellect.

> "Imagination and opinion are the bane of the particular (discursive) reason, because its dwelling-place is in the darkness.[1]
>
> The particular intelligence has given the (universal) intelligence a bad name: worldly desire has deprived the (worldly) man of his desire (in the world hereafter)[2]
>
> It behoves us to become ignorant of this (worldly) wisdom, (rather) must we clutch at madness"[3]

Rūmi says that he has had an experience of this worldly wisdom and had reached the conclusion that:

> "I have tried far-thinking (provident) intellect; henceforth I will make myself mad"[4]

Thereafter Rūmi advances an argument, clear-cut as well as to the point, in support of his contention He says that if intellect were sufficient for the comprehension of the revealed truths, then the rationalists, logicians and dialecticians would have also shared the secrets of religion

> "If the intellect could discern the (true) way in this question, Fakhr-i-Rāzi[5] would be an adept in religious mysteries"[6]

Rūmi holds the view that the sciences cultivated by human intellect cloud the knowledge of reality and make the seeker of Truth sceptical. Therefore, he pleads that one should shun philosophy and ratiocination, if he wants to inculcate an unflinching faith and attain the gnosis of the ultimate Reality.

> "If thou desire that misery should vanish (from thee),

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 87 (Book III-1558).

2 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 30 (Book V-463)

3 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 341 (Book II-2328).

4 *Ibid*, Vol. II, p 341 (Book II-2332).

5. Alluding to Fakhr ud-dīn Rāzi (d 1209 A D), the famous scholastic theologian, philosopher and author of a commentary on the Qur'ān entitled *Mafātih al-ghayb*

6 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p. 248 (Book V-4144)

endeavour that wisdom may vanish from thee—

The wisdom which is born of (human) nature and phantasy. the wisdom which lacks the overflowing grace of the Light of the Glorious (God).

The wisdom of this world brings increase of supposition and doubt; the wisdom of the Religion soars above the sky."[1]

In his view the logical syllogisms and the inferences drawn therefrom smack of an artificial method of reasoning which is only of limited utility. This method is unsuited for establishing the veracity of theological truths. Drawing an analogy between the logical argumentation and the wooden legs, he says:

"The leg of the syllogisers is of wood: a wooden leg is very infirm."[2]

The science of dialectics and the scholastic argumentation employed by it are incapable of producing conviction and an ardent faith. The reason for it is, according to Rūmi, that the dialectician is himself sceptical about the veracity of what he pleads; he merely rehearses the premises and propositions he has learnt from his teachers and the propounders of his school of thought.

"The imitator brings on to his tongue a hundred proofs and explanations, but he has no soul.

When the speaker has no soul and (spiritual glory), how should his speech have leaves and fruit?"[3]

Rūmi prefers intuition or spiritual cognition to the carnal intellect which is particular, individual, discursive, and dependent on sense-perception He holds the view that experiential awareness can gain knowledge pertaining to the terrestrial world only. On the other hand, the spiritual cognition emanating from the Universal Intellect is a lodestar for the human intellect; the intellect of man should be guided by intuition in the same way as

1. *The Mathnawi*. Vol II. p. 387 (Book II, 3201-3).
2. *Ibid*. Vol. II, p 115 (Book I, 2128).
3 *Ibid*. Vol. VI, p. 149 (Book V, 2480-81).

the former holds the reins of human frame. The spiritual cognition is thus, in the view of Rūmi, the Intellect of intellect without which the carnal intellect would not deserve to be known by that name. Spiritual cognition is, however, enjoyed only by those who have been enriched by an ardent faith and an unquestioning conviction in the Ultimate Reality.

> "The philosopher is in bondage to things perceived by the intellect, (but) the pure (saint) is he that rides as a prince on the Intellect of intellect."[1]

Volumes after volumes have been blackened by the discursive reason of man but it is only the Universal Intellect which illumines this universe

> "The intellect makes books entirely black (with writing), the Intellect of intellect keeps the horizons (the whole universe) filled (with light) from the Moon (of Reality).
>
> It is free from blackness and whiteness the light of its moon rises (and shines) upon heart and soul "[2]

The Intellect of intellect, born of faith and credence, guards man against carnal desires and earthly temptations. It instils a sense of faith and trust, confidence and hope while discursive reason brings disbelief and infidelity, doubt and suspicion.

> "The reason that is allied to Faith is like a just police-inspector: it is the guardian and magistrate of the city of the heart [3]
>
> Intellect is the guardian of Faith within the human frame; its fear keeps the baser-self in chains "[4]

Rūmi propounds the view that Spirit rules over intellect precisely in the same way as the senses are servitors of reason The Spirit can lay bare the mysteries of heaven and earth which are beyond the ken of intellect and resolve the most knotty problems

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1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 141 (Book III, 2527)

2 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 142 (Book III, 2531 32)

3 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 382 (Book IV, 1985).

4 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 347

to which reason cannot find a clue

"Sense-perception is a captive to the intellect, O reader, know also that the intellect is captive to the spirit

The spirit sets free the chained hand of the intellect and brings its embarrassed affairs into harmony."[1]

The philosopher cannot overstep the limits set by the information furnished by human perception and the rules of logical syllogism The carnal intellect is thus cast into a prison from which it cannot come out

"The philosopher simply speaks according to the science of reasoning, for his intellect cannot cross the threshold (of its abode).[2]

The philosopher killed (exhausted) himself with thinking. let him run on (in vain), for his back is turned towards the treasure

Let him run on the more he runs, the more remote does he become from the object of his heart's desire "[3]

The philosopher may possess a complete mastry over speculative branches of learning and may also be endowed with foresight but he lacks insight into his own self, although the cognition of the latter is more important than the knowledge of everything else.

"This tyrant excels in thousands of sciences '
But lo ! of his soul he knowest nothing.
Thou knowest the value of every commodity,
But not of thy own, Is'nt it a folly ?"[4]

Rūmi advises the philosophers and dialecticians to abandon philosophy and scholasticism and cultivate the knowledge of religious truth, for it alone has the light of certainty and wisdom

"How long wilt thou be mad after the Grecian lore,
Try to learn the wisdom of faith, once more "[5]

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1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 102 (Book III, 1824-25)

2 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 82

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 389 (Book VI, 2356-57)

4 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 449

5 *Ibid*, p 86

Rūmi says that man can attain the knowledge of Self through purification of his heart and rectitude of his behaviour. The more the heart is purified, the more it would be able to reflect, like a mirror, the wisdom contained in the faith and illuminate itself, without the help of a tutor or scripture, with the divine grace and revelatory guidance

"Make thyself pure from the attributes of self, that thou mayest behold thine own pure untarnished essence,

And behold within thy heart (all) the sciences of the prophets, without book and without preceptor and master."[1]

At another place Rūmi says:

"When the mirror of your heart becomes clear and pure, you will behold images (which are) outside of (the world of) water and earth.[2]

If the orifice of heart is open and clean; Divine light without an agent shall it glean."[3]

Love of God:

The impetus received by the movement of rationalism and scholasticism in the seventh century of the Muslim era had cooled the yearnings of the human soul for the apprehension of the Divine. From one end of the Islamic world to another, leaving a few illuminated souls here and there, nobody seemed to have any taste for Divine manifestation and illumination of the heart. It was, as if, an apathy or coolness had overtaken the hearts of the people It was a situation expressed by Iqbāl in this verse:

"The fire of love has cooled down; what a calamity it is!
The Musalman is naught but a heap of ashes"[4]

It was at this critical stage that Rūmi sounded the note of alarm and exhorted the people to betake the path of love. His call fired the frenzy of love once again in the entire world of Islam

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 188 (Book I, 3460-61)
2 *Ibid*, p 225 (Book II, 72)
3 *The Mathnawi Malvi Ma'anavi.*
4 *Bal-i-Jibreel*, p 168

Rūmi explained what he meant by love and to what sublime eminence it could raise the people. He says:

"By love bitter things become sweet, by love pieces of copper turn into gold;
By love dregs become clear, by love pains become healing,[1]
By love the prisons becomes a garden; sans love the garden becomes desolate,
By love stone turns into liquid; devoid of it, wax gets hard as a metal;
By love illness contributes health, and, the scourge becomes a blessing,
By love the dead is made living, by love the king is made a slave"[2]

Rūmi describes the vigour of love and its virtues in these words:

"Through Love the earthly body soared to the skies
the mountain began to dance and became nimble
Love inspired Mount Sinai, O lover, (so that) Sinai
(was made) drunken and *Moses fell in a swoon*"[3]

Love is so dignified and high-souled that it cares nothing for empires One who has once drunk at the spring of love looks with disdain on all worldly possessions Iqbāl has expressed the same idea in the couplet in which he says:

"Listless it turns the heart from the heaven and earth
How should I describe, what the flavour of love is like"[4]

The lover hardly cares for anything. he is mad after the Supreme Beauty. Rūmi says

"Love turns heedless of the worlds, this or that A

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 300 (Book II, 1529-30)

2 *The Mathnawi Molvi Ma'navi*, p 134 (Book II)

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 6 (Book I, 25-26) The words in italics give a mystical turn to the passage of Qur'ān (VII 143) which describes the epiphany of God on Mt Sinai and Moses becoming senseless

4 *Bal-i-Jibreel*, p 142

thousand madness it imbibes (in the lover's heart)."[1]

The lover becomes a King of kings and an object of true-love. He tramples underfoot the crowns and sceptres of authority.

"Overt and latent to the extreme his wonders are; For those who rule the heart aspire for him. He treads a path different from others, Even the throne of King is under his foot."[2]

Speaking of the love, arrogant and stately, Rūmi himself becomes enchanted by a tremendous spiritual enthusiasm. Says he:

"Worldly dominion is lawful (only) to those who indulge the body: We (lovers) are devoted to the everlasting kingdom of Love."[3]

Love is the only malady welcomed by its sufferer, who never desires to recover from it. The lover really desires a continuous increase in his affliction

"All the sick hope to be cured, but this sick one sobs, crying, 'Increase my sickness!'

I have found no drink sweeter than this poison: no state of health can be sweeter than this disease."[4]

After the illness of love, no other sickness can overtake the lover

"The words (spoken by him) deliver (thee) from words (of idle disputation), and the sickness (of love inspired by him) lets thee escape from the sickness (of sensuality)."[5]

If love is a sickness, it is worth a thousand health. It pains and pinches, but still it is sweeter than thousands of pleasures

"Therefore the sickness of love is the (very) soul of health; its pains are the envy of every pleasure."[6]

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1 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 247.
2. *Ibid*., p 247
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol. VI, p 502 (Book VI, 4421)
4 *Ibid*., p 512 (Book VI, 4598-99).
5. *Ibid*., p 512 (Book VI, 4593).
6 *Ibid*., p 512 (Book VI, 4594)

Rūmi says that love is *essentially* a spiritual passion Even if it be regarded a sin, virtue can rightly be sacrificed at its altar. In so far as it serves to purify the soul, it helps to ascend to Divine favour in a moment that years of penance and prayer may be unable to attain

> "No act of piety can be better than this sin years in comparison with this moment are (but) an hour"[1]

The blood of the martyr of love is purer than water, for the martyr does not need purifying bath and ablution

> "For martyrs, blood is better than water: this fault (committed by him) is better than a hundred right actions (of another)"[2]

The distraught lover of God is not liable to follow the laws and ordinances promulgated for the ordinary folk How can tithe be levied on a village already devastated?

> "To lovers there is a burning (which consumes them) at every moment tax and tithe are not (imposed) on a ruined village"[3]

Love is the heritage of Adam, while Satan has bequeathed artfulness and cunningness

> "He that is blessed and familiar (with spiritual mysteries) knows that intelligence is of Iblis, while love is of Adam."[4]

The cunning and artful depends on his wits and craftiness, while the lover seeks asylum from his friend and entrusts himself to his care Cunningness and artfulness are like swimming in a deluge while love is like the Noah's ark And has anybody seen the crafty and the cunning coming out safely from the great deluge and the Noah's ark submerging in it?

> "Intelligence is (like) swimming in the seas· he (the

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 512 (Book VI, 4600)
2 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 312 (Book II, 1767)
3. *Ibid*, Vol II, p. 312 (Book II, 1765)
4 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 349 (Book IV, 1402).

swimmer) is not saved: he is drowned at the end of the business."[1]

> Love is as a ship for the elect: seldom is calamity (the result), for the most part it is deliverance."[2]

The sagacity of intellect can be exchanged for the bewilderment of love, as the former is a product of doubt and uncertainty while the latter is born of gnosis and illumination

> "Sell intelligence and buy bewilderment: intelligence is opinion, while bewilderment is (immediate) vision."[3]

Rūmi's summon to betake the path of love is marked by his advice to become a lover if one cannot become a beloved. He says that it is not possible for everyone to become loveworthy but he can nevertheless become an adorer.

> "Thou who are not a Joseph, be a Jacob: be (familiar), like him, with weeping and sore distress.[4]
>
> If thou art not Shirin or Layla, be thou a true-love like Farhād or Majnun."[5]

He goes a step further and says that love being the greatest bounty, it is more profitable to be a lover than becoming a beloved. If the loved ones only knew the sublimity evoked by the devoted attachment, they would themselves choose to be adorers rather than remain an object of adoration.

> "Abandon the state of being loved (by men) and adopt the practice of loving (God), O you who think that you are excellent and pre-eminent."[6]

But love is too precious to be wasted on any transitory or finite being which is likely to become extinct. Love is a living spiritual passion and so the object of love should also be living and everlasting

> "Love for the dead is not lasting: Keep your love

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1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 349 (Book IV, 1403)
2 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 350 (Book IV, 1406)
3 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 350 (Book IV, 1407)
4 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 103 (Book II, 1909)
5 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 49
6 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 192 (Book V, 3189)

(fixed) on the Living One who increases spiritual life."[1]

Rūmi says that only the overwhelming grace of the Divine Beloved can truly inspire and refresh the heart of man

> "(But) love of the living is every moment fresher than a bud in the spirit and in the sight.
>
> Choose the love of that Living One who is everlasting, who gives thee to drink of the wine that increases life
>
> Choose the love of Him from whose love all the prophets gained power and glory."[2]

Nobody need have any apprehension of being denied access to that Glorious True-love for He is ever willing to respond to the call of the lover.

> "Do not say, 'We have no admission to that King'
> Dealings with the generous are not difficult"[3]

The love may appear to be a sickness for it produces a crushing grief in the lover's heart Its pain may be unbearable but if the lover is able to endure it, he is rewarded with an everlasting illumination and the gnosis of God.

> "Being in love is made manifest by soreness of heart there is no sickness like heart-sickness"
>
> The lover's ailment is separate from all other ailments love is the astrolabe[4] of the mysteries of God.[5]

The sickness of love is in fact a cure for every other illness, be it moral or spiritual Where the spiritual healers fail and yield to despair, the love succeeds and cures all the moral and spiritual diseases in no time. A man so restored to moral and spiritual health by the grace of love exclaims thus under the spell of its enchantment

> "Hail, O Love that bringest us good gain—thou that art the physician of all our ills,

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1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI p 197 (Book V, 3272)

2 *Ibid*, Vol II, p. 15 (Book I, 218-20)

3 *Ibid*, Vol. II, p 15 (Book I, 221)

4. Astrolabe is an instrument for measuring the altitude of the stars and solving the problems of spherical astronomy

5. *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 10 (Book I, 109-10)

The remedy of our pride and vainglory, our Plato and our Galen!"[1]

Love kindles a flame that reduces every thing save the beloved to a heap of ashes. It is extremely jealous and arrogant to let anything survive besides itself.

"Love is that flame which, when it blazes up, consumes everything else but the Beloved.

He (the lover) drives home the sword of *Not* in order to kill all other than God: thereupon consider what remains after *Not*.[2]

There remains *except* God: all the rest is gone. Hail, O mighty Love, destroyer of polytheism!"[3]

The love of God is an ocean, boundless and wide-spread; it pervades the cosmos and is without any beginning or end. It is a story of the rapturous flame kindled in the heart of man, which can never be described adequately and therefore it is better to acknowledge one's incompetence to narrate it and hold his tongue.

"If I should continue to describe Love, a hundred Resurrections would pass, and it (my description would still be) incomplete,

For there is a limit to the date of the Resurrection, but what limit can there be where the Divine attributes are (concerned)."[4]

The World of the Heart[5]

The message of love diffused so vigorously by Rūmi could not have taken roots without a liveliness and warmth in the heart of

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1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 6 (Book I, 23-24)

2 Alludes to the Qur'ānic Verse (XXVIII 88) which says "And cry not unto any other god along with Allah There is no God save Him Everything will perish save His Countenance"

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 38 (Book V, 588-90)

4 *Ibid*, Vol VI, pp. 131-32 (Book V, 2189-90).

5 The heart or the *Qalb*, as Rūmi calls it, is the spiritual entity which abides in the physical body of man and controls his organic and physical functions It is called *Qalb* (heart), because of its connection with the physical heart.

[*Continued on page 352*]

those to whom it was addressed In his time too, however, people were increasingly losing sight of the power and efficacy, vigour and energy possessed by the heart. Intellect was gaining ascendancy over heart · mind was being enlightened leaving the heart dull and cool The instigating self of man, comprising appetite and earthly temptations, was taking hold of him as a result of his worldly pursuits Rūmi called attention towards the fathomless vitality of the spiritual entity residing in the human heart, he narrated its wonders and miracles He reminded that every man has a world of his own which can accommodate the most far-flung empires of this earth without any danger of its being devastated by the enemy

> "Heart is the abode of peace, O friend, 'tis a country,
> Whose citadel is strong, wherein reigns peace and amity."[1]
>
> The heart is abode of security, O friends; (it has) fountains and rose-gardens within rose-gardens"[2]

Rūmi says that the gardens of our terrestrial world are short-lived, but those of the heart of man are everlasting, the former take a long time in being raised and implanted but can be laid waste in no time while the latter can instantly be brought into being without any danger of its ever withering away

> "The flowers that grow from plants are (living but) a moment, the flowers that grow from Reason are (ever) fresh
>
> The flowers that bloom from earth become faded; the flowers that bloom from the heart—oh, what a joy!"[3]

Rūmi tells us that instead of directing our efforts to the pursuits of worldly-pleasures and carnal enjoyment, we should

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At the same time, its nature is rather both, intellectual and emotional as opposed to intellect which possesses only the former quality When illuminated it is capable of knowing the essence of God

1 *The Mathnawi Malvi Ma'navi*, p 199

2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 31 (Book III, 515)

3 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 515 (Book VI, 4649 50)

endeavour to drink the elixir of Divine love, for only this can transmute our souls into a majestic and lofty state, enabling us to enjoy the bloom of true happiness, irrespective of our station and age.

> "Eat your heart (in love of God), that you may be young always (and that) your Visage (may be rosy) with Divine illumination, like the *arghawan*[1]
>
> To become intoxicating thyself like wine (of divine love) seek a heart, good and purer, It shall make thee smiling and cheerful like a flower"[2]

Rūmi, however, rings a note of caution that one should not be misled by the mention of 'heart' by him He does not mean the heart that abides in the body and throbs, which is a seat of carnal desires and sexual appetites, completely oblivious of the taste of love and the richnees of conviction, devoid of the frenzy of spiritual passion, and whose garden never blooms That is not a human heart—it is a slab of stone

> "Is narrow and dark as the souls of Jews, (being) destitute of (spiritual) savour of the loving King.
>
> Neither has the radiance of the Sun shown into that heart, nor is there (in it any) spaciousness or opening of the door"[1]

This heart too, undoubtedly, resembles the heart of an illuminated person, in its shape and make, but it really bears no relation to the other except that both are denoted by a common name Water is the name for both—that which is found in a swamp and that which flows in a river, but, one can quench the thirst by the latter while the former being mixed with dust and filth is quite useless The two hearts differ exactly in the same manner, one belongs to those who are saints and sages, having a purer and elevated soul, while the other throbs in the body of an uncouth

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1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 347 (Book II-2442) *Arghawan* alludes to the pink blossoms of the Judas-tree

2 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 154

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 384 (Book II-3130-31)

libertine, no better than a dead-weight and a piece of flesh

> "You say, 'I too have a heart', (but) the heart is above the empyrean, it is not below.
>
> Certainly in the dark earth also there is water, but 't is not proper for you to wash your hands with that water,
>
> Because, though it is water, it is overcome by the earth Do not, then, say of your heart, 'This too is a heart'
>
> The heart that is higher than the heavens is the heart of the saint or the prophet "[1]

Rūmi, then, holds out hope for the common herd as well He says that the human heart is, after all, a precious treasure which is never discarded by God He is willing to accept every heart presented to Him, for He has not an eye on the profit

> "(There) that Gracious One hath purchased the piece of goods that no people would look at on account of its shabbiness
>
> With Him no base coin is rejected. for His object in buying is not (to make a) profit "[2]

Rūmi advises that since the belly of man is a veil between him and the Supreme Being, it should be cast aside Once man rises above carnal appetites and earthly desires, the mysteries of the spiritual realm are laid bare before him

> "Leave the belly and stride towards the heart (spirit), in order that the salutation may come to you from God without (any) veil "[3]

Place and Worth of Humanity

The autocratic kingdoms of the middle ages, their unjust and tyrannical ways of government along with the continued warfare between powerful despots, which always held a bleak future for the people, had, in consequence, brought about a sense of despondency and inferiority amongst the people The people had lost their

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 125 (Book III, 2245-48)

2 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 329 (Book VI, 1266 67)

3 *Ibid* Vol VI, p 151 (Book V, 2514)

worth in their own eyes. In this atmosphere of mental torpor came the Iranian mysticism which zealously propagated the negative doctrine of *fana*, or annihilation, which meant the loss of ego and a passing away of the human consciousness in a mystical union. The inevitable result of these teachings was that the ideas of self-affirmation and self-perfection, which are at the root of courage and manliness, struggle and betterment, had come to be looked down upon as unpardonable spiritual sins The Iranian mysticism, in its zeal to propagate the cultivation of divine attributes and the absorption of individual self in the Universal Ego through annihilation of the Self, had depicted such an enlarged portrait of the baser elements in the human self that one felt ashamed of the manhood. It hād come to regard the negation of mandom as the ultimate end. This spirit of non-worldliness and renunciation of physical activity, denigration of humanity and the negation of Self had also made inroads into the literary compositions of the time. The doctrine preaching negation of the world and life had imperceptibly brought the urge of life to a standstill within the people who were overtaken by a sense of dejection and helplessness, and who sometimes regarded themselves as baser than even the beasts and vegetable growths Man had thus become completely oblivious of his exalted position in this universe and the boundless possibilities of his spiritual and material progress through the unfolding of individual potentialities In order to remove this misunderstanding and rectify this defect, Rūmi forcefully expounded the theory of the exalted position enjoyed by man, in his own inimitable style, which lit the flame of self-affirmation, hope and confidence in the hearts of men The melodius epics elevating the position of man, sung by Rūmi, have had a far-reaching effect on the subsequent Islamic poetry and opened a new vista of thought for the mystics and poets after him.

Rūmi invites man's attention to his unique creation as a human being. This is a Divine boon, he asserts, and a special favour from God, His robe of honour, prepared and reserved for Adam's progeny alone. This 'human creation' has been repeatedly referred to by God in the Qur'ān in the eulogistic expression of

Ahsan-i-Taqwīm, that is, *of the best stature* [1]

"Read in (the Sura entitled) *Wa'l-Tīn* (the words), (*We created Man*) *in the best proportion*, for the spirit, O friend, is a precious pearl

(That spirit created) *in the best proportion* surpasses the empyrean · (that spirit created) *in the best proportion* is beyond (the range of) thought "[2]

Rūmi asks · Who else except man was crowned with the epithets, "*We have honoured the children of Adam*"[3] and "*We have given thee Abundance*"[4] by the Lord of the Worlds?

"Did this heaven ever hear (the words) *We have honoured* which this sorrowful Man heard (from God)?[5]

The tiara of *We have honoured* (*the sons of Adam*) is on the crown of thy head, the collar of *We have given thee* hangs on thy breast."[6]

Rūmi tells us that man is the centre and essence of this universe, he unites the inward and outward aspects of all creations, he is the source of all goodness and beauty in the world, he is the best of creations, in short, he comprises a universe in his own self

"(He is) a sun hidden in a mote suddenly that mote opens its mouth (and reveals the sun)

The heavens and the earth crumble to atoms before that Sun when he springs forth from ambush [7]

Thou art the sea of knowledge hidden in a dewdrop, thou art the universe hidden in a body three ells long."[8]

Man, Rūmi says further, is the ultimate end of creation and it is for him alone that the universe was created by God The entire

1 *At-Tīn*, 4
2 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p 314 (Book VI, 1005-6)
3 *Banī Isrāel*, 70
4 *Al-Kauthar*, 1
5 *The Mathnawī*, Vol VI, p. 265 (Book VI, 199)
6 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 214 (Book V, 3574)
7 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 511 (Book VI, 4580 81)
8 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 214 (Book V, 3579)

creation, therefore, is bound to serve him

> "Every wine is the slave of this (comely) figure and (fair) cheek (of thine) all the drunken feel envy of thee
>
> Thou hast no need of rosy wine: take leave of (its) rosiness, thou (thyself) art (its) rosiness
>
> Man is the substance, and the celestial sphere is his accident; all things are (like) a branch or the step of a ladder. he is the object.
>
> Thou seekest knowledge from books—oh, ridiculous! Thou seekest pleasure from *halwa* (sweetmeats)—oh, ridiculous!
>
> Service to thee is imposed on all existence as a duty· how should a substance beg for help from an accident?"[1]

And this is not all, man displays the Divine attributes and is a medium through whom God reflects His signs and lustre of beneficence

> "Adam is the astrolabe of the attributes of (Divine) Sublimity the nature of Adam is the theatre for His revelations
>
> Whatever appears in him (Adam) is the reflection of Him, just as the moon is reflected in the water of the river[2]
>
> Know that (the world of) created beings is like pure and limpid water in which the attributes of the Almighty are shining
>
> Their knowledge and their justice and their clemency are like a star of heaven (reflected) in running water"[3]

Rūmi, however, still not satisfied that he has been able to narrate sufficiently the excellence of the son of Adam, adds that it is, in reality, something which cannot be described fully.

> "If I declare the value of this inaccessible (pearl), I shall be consumed, and the hearer too will be consumed"[4]

And who can really assess the worth of man, a creation so

1 *The Mathnawi* Vol VI p 214 (Book V, 3567-68, 3575, 3577-78)

2 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 431 (Book IV, 3138-39)

3 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 433 (Book IV, 3172-73)

4 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 314 (Book IV, 1007)

sublime and grand, but the pity is that man himself does not know how precious he is He is ever willing to sell himself at a trifling price

> "O thou to whom reason and foresight and intelligence are slaves, how art thou selling thyself so cheaply?"[1]

Rūmi then says that Allah is Himself the purchaser of man, for only He knows the worth of His supreme creation:

> "He is our Purchaser—*God hath purchased*[2] hark, rise above anxiety for any (other) purchaser.
>
> Seek the Purchaser who is seeking thee, One who knows thy beginning and end."[3]

But Rūmi adds that the qualities of head and heart which make man a human being are born in those who cultivate them and not in those who remain beasts in the garb of men, nor yet in those who have been led astray by their carnal desires and the temptations of their baser-self Those who lack these qualities are not men but lifeless caricatures of human beings·

> "These (others) are not men, they are (mere) forms. they are dead with (desire for) bread and killed by appetite."[4]

It was, however, difficult to find in the days of Rūmi, as in every other age, those who could be called human beings in the true sense of the word. An overwhelming majority of the people who passed under the name of human beings were no better than beasts and reptiles in their conduct and behaviour, and Rūmi had grown weary of them. Being himself in search of man, he has given expression to his quest in this parable:

> "Yesterday, with a lamp, the *Shaikh* went round the city
> 'Tired of these beasts, a man I want,' (said he),
> 'These easy-going mates, they have sickened me'
> 'A lion of God; or Rustam, the son of Zal, That's now my fancy.'

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 214 (Book V, 3576)
2 *At-Taubah*, p 111
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 89 (Book V, 1463-64)
4 *Ibid*, Vol VI, p 174 (Book V, 2886)

'He is not to be found, I have sought him long' said I,
'A thing not to be found? That's what I desire, said he.' "[1]

Self-Assertion:

Rūmi did not believe, like some other mystics, in self-negation, indifference, lethargy and renunciation of physical activity On the contrary, he affirmed the importance of social progress, active life, self-assertion and self-preservation He considered that the theories of monasticism and renunciation of the world were opposed to the teachings of Islam and the example set by the Prophet. "Had social life not been the object of God," asserted Rūmi, "He would not have prescribed congregational prayers five times a day and on Fridays, and the duty of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong"

"The bird said to him, 'O Khwāja, don't stay in (monastic) seclusion monasticism is not good in regard to the religion of Ahmad (Mohammed)

The Prophet has forbidden monasticism. how have you embraced a heresy, O trifler?

The conditions (imposed by Islam) are: (to take part in) the Friday worship and the public prayers, to enjoin good and shun evil,

Live amongst the community that is the object of (Divine) mercy. do not forsake the religion of Ahmad (Mohammed), be ruled by his practice "[2]

In the days of Rūmi, *tawakkul* i e. confidence or sincere trust in God was held to mean a complete resignation to the preordained will of God Any effort. direct or indirect, to obtain the means of subsistence, or admit the thought of providing for the morrow was looked down upon and deemed as incompatible with *tawakkul*. Rūmi explained the correct meaning of *tawakkul* as taught by the

1 *Divan-i-Shamsh-i-Tebrez*, p 50
2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI. p 284 (Book VI, 478-80 and 483)

Sharīʿah and urged the people to make effort for earning their livelihood with trust in the beneficence of God Expounding the meaning of the Tradition: *Tether thy camel and have trust in God,* Rūmi says.

> "The Prophet said with a loud voice, 'While trusting in God bind the knee of thy camel'.
>
> Harken to the signification of 'The earner (worker) is beloved of God'. through trusting in God do not become neglectful as to the (ways and) means."[1]
>
> Harken, O Sire, to combine thy effort with trust in God; to earn thy living, strive and work hard.
>
> Strive hard to fulfil the duty charged unto thee, if thy effort slackens, what a fool thou would be!"[2]

In an allegory told by him Rūmi has repeated in the form of a debate between the lion and the beasts all those arguments which are normally set forth by the easy-going and half-hearted persons in support of their view of quietism Thereafter, Rūmi advances his own views in the form of the reply given by the lion

Rūmi explains that the limbs, capacities and capabilities given to the living beings are enough to indicate that the Divine Providence requires their active exertion and application in the form of effort If anybody hands over a spade to his servant, it implies that the master wants him to dig the earth In the same way God has endowed us with the limbs and a capacity to work which is a clear indication of His intention that we should strive and set to work all our capabilities and free-will to earn our subsistence Quietism and suspension of effort are against the intention of Divine Providence and, in reality, they amount to the spurning of the Divine gifts bestowed to the human beings Therefore, *tawakkul* really means that one should make all possible efforts and have trust in God only in so far as the result is concerned, for, notwithstanding the efforts made, the success or failure still remains entirely in the hands of God

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 51 (Book I, 913-14)

2 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 26

"'Yes,' said the lion, 'but *the Lord of His servants*[1] set a ladder before our feet.

Step by step must we climb towards the roof to be a necessitarian here is (to indulge in) foolish hopes

You have feet why do you make yourself out to be lame? You have hands why do you conceal the fingers (whereby you grasp)?

When the master put a spade in the slave's hand, his object was made known to him (the slave) without (a word falling from his) tongue

When you take His signs to heart, you will devote your life to fulfilling that indication (of His will)

He will give you many hints (for the understanding) of mysteries, He will remove the burden from you and give you (spiritual) authority.

Freewill is the endeavour to thank (God) for His beneficence your necessitarianism is the denial of that beneficence

Thanksgiving for the power (of acting freely) increases your power[2], necessitarianism takes the (Divine) gift (of freewill) out of your hand

Beware! do not sleep, O inconsiderate necessitarian, save underneath that fruit-laden tree,

So that every moment the wind may shake the boughs and shower upon the sleeper (spiritual) dessert and provision for the journey.

If you are putting trust in God, put trust (in Him) as regards (your) work sow (the seed), then rely upon the Almighty'"[3]

Rūmi sets out to explain, on behalf of the lion, that the way of

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1 "Lord of His servants" alludes to Qur'ānic verse (*Adh-Dhariyāt* 56) "I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me."

2 This paraphrases the verse of the Qur'ān (*Ibrāhīm*, 7) "If ye give thanks, I will give you more (of My bounty)"

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, pp 52/53 (Book I, 929-32, 934-35, 938-39, 941-42, and 947)

the prophets and the saints consists of striving and making effort He also explains that "this worldliness" from which the *Sharī'ah* wants a faithful to seek deliverance does not comprise the riches or offsprings; it lies in being attached to worldly possessions and temptations, since the Divine blessings shall be denied to those who lead a life of negligence and ingratitude.

> " 'Yes', said the lion; 'but at the same time consider the exertions of the prophets and the true believers.
>
> God, exalted is He, prospered their exertion and what they suffered of oppression and heat and cold
>
> O master, exert thyself so long as thou canst in (following) the way of the prophets and saints!
>
> What is this world? To be forgetful of God; it is not merchandise and silver and weighing-scales and women
>
> As regards the wealth that you carry for religion's sake, 'How good is righteous wealth (for the righteous man)!' as the Prophet recited
>
> Exertion is a reality, and medicine and disease are realities the sceptic in his denial of exertion practised (and thereby affirmed) exertion' "[1]

Critique of the Rulers:

Rūmi reproached not only the populace or the learned who made mistakes in following or expounding the religious precepts, in his preachings and poems he often bitterly criticised those who held the reigns of government He openly taxed them with the charge that they were an inefficient lot who had turned the government into a child's play In the days of despotic rule, Rūmi's criticism could have had dangerous consequences, but he never held his tongue from expressing what he considered to be just and truthful

> "When authority is in the hands of profligates, (?)
> Dhu'l-Nūn[2] is inevitably in prison.

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1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II pp 55-56 (Book I. 971-72 975 983-84 and 991)

2 A famous mystic, Thauban ibn Ibrāhīm, generally known as Dhu'l-Nūn al-Misri (d. 245 A.H. 859 A.D.)

When the pen (of authority) is in the hand of a traitor, unquestionably Mansūr[1] is on a gibbet.

When this affair (dominion) belongs to the foolish, the necessary consequence is (that) *they*[2] *kill the prophets*.[3]

Further, he criticises the rulers of his own times in these words

"When authority falls into the hands of one who has lost the (right) way, he deems it to be a high position (*jāh*), (but in reality) he has fallen into a pit (*chāh*)

The foolish have become leaders, and from fear (of them) the wise have drawn their heads into the cloak."[4]

Dialectics.

Rūmi is critical of the rationalists for their undue dependence on senses. At the same time he criticises the dialecticians too for their formalism and addiction to disputation. But, unlike other mystics, he is not content with summoning the people towards love and faith, intuition and spiritual enlightenment alone, he also tries to find out a convincing answer, in his own inimitable manner, to the difficult questions of dialectics and philosophy. In other words, Rūmi's approach to scholasticism is not simply critical but affirmative and constructive as well. In cases where the dialectical method leads nowhere, or the logical syllogism employed for it makes the matter even more intricate and insoluble, Rūmi approaches the problem directly as if it were a simple question and brings forth such parallels, from everyday happenings, or apologues, anecdotes, fables or legends, that a solution to the problem almost suggests itself and helps to convince the reader of the truth underlying it. The method employed by Rūmi is simple yet so subtle, if it can be so-called, that the reader never feels that Rūmi is leading him to a certain conclusion which he did not already

1 Mansūr Hallaj, another mystic (d 309 A H /913 A D)
2 Qur'ān, Al-i-Imran 112
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 293 (Book II, 1393 and 1398-99).
4 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 352 (Book IV, 1447 and 1452)

know; on the contrary, he feels as if Rūmi has simply given expression to his own views on that particular question. The Mathnawi is thus a striking example of solving the most intricate theological and metaphysical issues, and also of instilling a deep conviction through the solutions offered by it, which cannot be had by going through a library of philosophical dissertations. No reader of the Mathnawi can doubt the sincerity of Rūmi and his attachment to the Creator or the inspiration drawn by him from higher sources in dealing with these intricate issues.

Rūmi belonged to the Ashʿarite school of dialectics and had earlier been a profound scholar and successful teacher of the Islamic scholasticism. He did not, however, remain a mere interpreter of that school but laid the foundation of a new method of dialectical reasoning which is quite distinct and more efficacious than the method of earlier propounders of his school He is nearer to the Qurʾānic arguments in approach and treatment of the theological problems, for he follows in the footsteps of the Qurʾān in its simplicity, directness and appeal to the common-sense

Existence of God:

The existence of God has always been the fundamental and the most important problem for all the religious doctors and scholastics. Religious philosophers of the old have undoubtedly argued the issue quite logically which puts their adversaries to silence but their arguments fail to impart conviction in the existence of God. The Qurʾān, on the other hand, appeals to the common-sense of man and invokes his inherent though dormant inclination, to accept the Supreme Truth. The Qurʾān calls upon the Prophet to declare:

> *Can there be doubt concerning Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth*?[1]

The manner in which the Qurʾān directly introduces the subject and shows its astonishment on the doubt concerning Allah, catches man unawares and then he is led to think of the Creator of the universe, the Fashioner of all creations. The Qurʾān helps

1. *Ibrāhīm*, 10.

man to proceed from the effect to the cause, from the things made to the maker and from the heaven and earth to their Fashioner. One finds this method employed throughout in the Qur'ān. It calls attention to the creations of God Almighty and helps to ponder over His attributes; and, this is the easiest and shortest as well as the surest route, according to the Qur'ān, to attain the gnosis of God.

> *We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within themselves until it will be manifest unto them that it is the Truth. Doth not thy Lord suffice since He is witness over all things?*[1]

Rūmi employs the same method of argumentation in the Mathnawi. He draws inference from the universe to the First Cause and the Creator of the universe. He says that we see a number of incidents taking place in the world but not the doer. It is thus sufficiently clear, argues Rūmi, that there is some one who is the ultimate cause of these happenings; the act is before our eyes while the doer is hidden:

> "See ye the pen writing but not the pen that writes:
> The horse is seen running, but not that who rides;
> The arrow is visible, but not the bow.
> The life is in sight, but hidden is the Life of lives"[2]

Rūmi argues that the movement is itself an evidence of the power which is providing the driving force If there is a whiff of air, there must also be someone who has put it into motion.

> "Thou sawest the wind moving: know that a Mover of the wind is here, who drives the wind along.
>
> Therefore in the mind of every one possessing knowledge this is certain, that with everything that moves there is a mover."[3]

May be that man does not see the cause, but the effect is certainly before him. Therefore, it is evident that there must be the cause of everything, even though it may be hidden from one's eyes If a human frame has life and movement, it must have a

1 *Fussilat*, 53

2. *Mathnawi Maulvi Ma'nawi*, p 305

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, pp 279-80 (Book IV, 125 and 159).

soul too. One cannot see the soul, but is not the self-propelled movement of the body a proof that there is a soul in it?

> "If you do not see him visibly, apprehend him by means of the manifestation of the effect.
>
> The body is moved by the spirit: you do not see the spirit: but from the movement of the body know the spirit (to be its mover)."[1]

Rūmī asks. What else can be a greater evidence of the existence of the Ultimate Cause than its effects, and of the Creator than His creation? What else one wants in order to accept the existence of the sun than the light it casts on the world?

> "Does not light of the sun, by its presence,
> Serve thee a proof of its existence."[2]

The universe does not simply exist, it is functioning in accordance with certain set physical laws in an orderly fashion The celestial bodies move in their orbit according to a pre-ordained law; the wind and clouds are not free to go wherever they like. All these laws, drawn out so carefully and minutely, and the order and sequence we see in the cosmos, drive us to one conclusion only, and It is that the universe has a Creator and Ruler who is Wise, Knowing. The world can never deviate for a moment from the path chalked out for it by Him

> "If thou seest not the revolutionary action of the (Divine) decree, look at the surging and whirling (that appears) in the (four) elements,
>
> The sun and moon are two mill-oxen, going round and round and keeping watch (over the world)
>
> The stars likewise run from house to house (in the sky) and convey every good and evil fortune
>
> The cloud, too, is lashed with a whip of fire, (as though to say), 'Go that way, do not go this way!
>
> Rain upon such and such a valley, do not rain in this quarter'. He reprimands it, saying, 'Give ear!'"[3]

1. *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 280 (Book IV, 154-55)
2 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 305
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, pp 309-10 (Book IV, 916, 919-20 and 932-33)

Rūmi says that God has not created the universe for His own benefit; it has been created for the benefit and continuous promotion of man from one stage to another. He elucidates the ultimate purpose underlying the creation of the universe which is being sought without any success by the philosophers and dialecticians, in a beautiful aud convincing manner.

"The Prophet has declared that God said, 'My purpose in creating was to do good,

I created to the intent that they (My creatures) might draw some gain from Me, and that they might smear their hands with My honey,

Not to the end that I might draw some gain (from them), and that I might tear off a coat from one (who is) naked.'[1]

Not to derive advantage did I create; it was but simply (to shower) rewards on My bondsmen."[2]

Prophethood ·

Instead of himself explaining the significance of prophethood, Rūmi prefers the prophets to elucidate the content and purpose of prophethood. They tell us that as Divine physicians they purify the hearts of mankind. Other physicians reach the heart by feeling the pulse but prophets need no medium to look into it. Ordinary physicians are concerned with the physical health of man while prophets cleanse his heart and rectify his morals and behaviour.

"We are the (spiritual) physicians, the disciples of God · the Red Sea beheld us *and was cloven* [3]

Those natural physicians are different, for they look into the heart by means of a pulse

We look well into the heart without intermediary, for through clairvoyance we are in a high belvedere

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 357 (Book II, 2635-37)

2 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nawi*, p 159

3 Alludes to the verse of Qur'ān "Then We inspired Moses, saying. Smite the Sea with thy staff, and it parted and each part was as a mountain vast" (*Ash-Shu'ara'*, 63)

Those (others) are physicians of food and fruit, by them the animal soul is (made) strong.

We are physicians of deeds and words: the ray of the light of (Divine) Majesty is our inspirer,

(So that we know) that a deed like this will be beneficial to thee, while a deed like that will cut (thee) off from the Way;

And that words like these will lead thee on (to grace), while words like those will bring anguish to thee.

To those (others) physicians a (sample of) urine is evidence, whereas this evidence of ours is the inspiration of the Almighty

We do not desire a fee from anyone[1]: our fee comes from a Holy Place.

Hark, come hither for the incurable disease! We, one by one, are a medicine for the (spiritually) sick."[2]

In advancing arguments in support of the prophethood, Rūmi depends on such arguments as are appealing to the heart rather than bringing forth logical pleas for proving it on rational grounds He says that every act of a prophet tells us that he is an apostle of God He is a miracle from head to foot; one need have only a pure heart, untouched by hostility and pride to recognise a prophet In other words, the prophet is himself an irrefutable evidence of his prophethood. And this was the reason why Abdullah ibn Salām[3] exclaimed as soon as he saw the Prophet of Islam: "By God, this cannot be the countenance of an imposter."

"The heart of every one knowing its taste is cloven;
Like a miracle wrought by the word, when a prophet hath spoken!"

Rūmi says that the conscience of the followers of a prophet is perfectly in tune with the call he gives. Whatever the prophet

1 *Vide* the verse of the Qur'ān "And O my people! I ask of you no wealth therefor" (*Hūd*. 29)

2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 151 (Book III, 2700-9)

3. A distinguished companion of the Prophet of Islam who was formerly a Jew Rabbi

enjoins, his followers accept it ungrudgingly. The followers are really enchanted into an alluring rapture by the invigorating and revolutionising call of the prophet, since, the prophet has a message entirely different and new, capable of arousing a righteous zeal amongst his followers, that is unknown to any other view of life and the world.

> "When a prophet utters a cry from without, the soul of the community falls to worship within,
>
> Because never in the world will the soul's ear have heard from any one a cry of the same kind as his
>
> That stranger[1] (the soul), by immediate perception of the strange (wondrous) voice, has heard from God's tongue (the words). *Verily*[2] *I am near* [3]

Rūmi says that no external evidence is required of the genuineness and truthfulness of a prophet because the call of the prophet strikes a hidden cord in the hearts of those who follow him. The call of a prophet constitutes both a premise and an argument in its favour, for, that is the only natural and convincing testimony required by the true nature of man When a thirsty person is offered water he never asks to prove it first nor the child calls for any evidence before taking to the breast of his mother What is really required for finding credence and acceptance of the truth is simply a sincere demand and sympathetic approach by the seeker of truth

> "When you say to a thirsty man, 'Make haste! there is water in the cup take the water at once,'
>
> Will the thirsty man say in any event?—'This is (mere) assertion go from my side, O pretender! Get thee far away!
>
> Or (else) produce some testimony and proof that this

---

1 The soul separated from God is "a stranger" and also an exile

2 The Qur'ān says "And when My servants question thee concerning Me, then surely I am nigh" (*Al-Baqarah*, 186)

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 408 (Book II, 3599-360)

is of aqueous kind and consists of the *water that runs from a spring*.[1]

Or (suppose that) a mother, cries to her suckling babe, 'Come, I am mother. hark, my child!'—

Will the babe say?—'O mother bring the proof (of it), so that I may take comfort in thy milk'"[2]

Rūmi does not consider that miracles are capable of inspiring faith, or to say it differently, it is not necessary that anyone witnessing a miracle should also become convinced of the truthfulness of a prophet's message And this is an incontrovertible fact too, since the biography of the Prophet of Islam hardly mentions anyone whose conversion was brought about by a miracle All the illustrious companions of the Prophet were those who had responded to his call—and that is really what the faith means to a person Rūmi says that the miracles are worked by the prophets simply to outwit their opponents and, evidently, one defeated in arguments can hardly be expected to become a faithful ally. The cause of attraction and devoted attachment lies in affinity and spiritual akinness.

"Miracles are not the cause of religious faith, 'tis the scent of homogeneity that attracts (to itself) qualities (of the same kind)

Miracles are (wrought) for the purpose of subjugating the foe the scent of homogeneity is (only) for the winning of hearts.

A foe is subjugated, but not a friend · how should a friend have his neck bound?"[3]

The prophets are high-souled, dignified and stately, and therefore one has to be submissive and humble in order to derive benefit from them Like sovereigns, it behoves them to ordain, and, for others, to listen and act. Contention and debate with a

1 Alludes to *Al-Mulk*, 30 "Say Have ye thought If (all) your water were to disappear into the earth, who then could bring you gushing water?"

2. *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 408 (Book II, 3593-97).

3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 324 (Book VI, 1176-78)

prophet simply make one unfit to grasp the truth of his message:

> "If there are thousands of (eager) seekers (of knowledge) and a single weary (disgusted) one, the Messenger will refrain from delivering his message
>
> These mystery-telling Messengers of the hidden Mind require a hearer who has the nature of Israfil [1]
>
> They have a haughtiness and pride like (that of) kings: they require service from the people of the world
>
> Until you perform the observances due to them, how will you gain profit from their message?"[2]

Thereafter Rūmi asks: why should not the prophets be so dignified? They have to be lordly for they are the apostles of the Lord of the worlds

> "How is every (kind of) observance acceptable to them?—for they have come from the Sublime Palace."[3]

Life after Death:

Rūmi propounds the view that death is the gateway to eternal life and spiritual advancement. For death is not annihilation but simply dissolution of the bodily particles, essential for sustaining higher forms of spiritual life, so, it is nothing more than demolition of the ruins before undertaking a new construction.

> "The spiritual way ruins the body and, after having ruined it, restores it to prosperity:
>
> Ruined the house for the sake of the golden treasure, and with that same treasure builds it better (than before)."[4]

In another verse he expresses the same idea: death bespeaks of a richer and fuller life in the same way as the shedding of the blossom is a sign of fruits becoming visible

> "When the blossom is shed, the fruit comes to a head:

1 The archangle who is always listening eagerly for the Divine command to sound the trumphet on the Day of Resurrection

2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 202 (Book III, 3604-7)

3 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 202 (Book III, 3609)

4 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 20 (Book I, 306-7)

when the body is shattered, the spirit lifts up its head."[1]

It is unthinkable that God, the Bestower and Enricher, shall take away such a precious thing as life from His bondsmen without any recompense Undoubtedly He intends to disperse the bodily particles to refashion the spirit into another vehicle homogeneous with its true nature and faculties in an everlasting world, and bestow upon it the gifts which no eye has seen and no ear has heard, nor any anxiety shall enter there into the hearts of men.

> "One who is slain by a king like this, he (the king) leads him to fortune and to the best (most honourable) estate
>
> Unless he (the king) had seen advantage to him (the gold-smith) in doing violence to him, how should that absolute Mercy have sought to do violence ?"[2]

Rūmi lays stress on the fact that death is essential for a higher and eternal life He illustrates his view thus:

> "The ignorant (child) first washes the tablet, then he writes the letters upon it
>
> At the time of washing the tablet (of the heart) one must recognise that it will be made into a book (of mysteries).
>
> When they lay the foundation of a house (to rebuild it), they dig up the first foundation.
>
> (Also), people first fetch up clay from the depths of the earth in order that at last you may draw up *flowing water*"[3]
>
> To write we seek a paper that is blank seed is dispersed in a field not already sown

It is nothingness from which existence springs forth, or, in other words, it is the want that sets in motion the munificence and mercy of the Creator Those who are generous and benevolent treat the poor with a loving-kindness

1. *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 160 (Book I, 2929)
2 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 17 (Book I, 242-3)
3 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 315 (Book II, 1827 and 1829-31) "Flowing water" alludes to the Qur'ānic verse, *Al-Mulk* 30

"Life comes out of the dead, so do the rich need poor to be bounteous"

Rūmi brings forth yet another argument in support of his contention He calls to attention the evolutionary process which required the soul to progress, stage by stage, from a lower existence to a higher one until it attained the shape of a human being. "How could have the soul of man advanced to its present dignified position", asks Rūmi, "if it had continued to exist in its earlier state?" There is hardly any reason, therefore, to fear death.

"From the day when thou camest into existence, thou wert fire or air or earth

If thou hadst remained in that condition, how should this (present) height have been reached by thee?

The Transmuter did not leave thee in thy first (state of) existence He established a better (state of) existence in the place of that (former one),

Thou hast gained these (successive) lives from (successive) deaths. why hast thou averted thy face from dying in Him?

What loss was thine (what loss didst thou suffer) from those deaths, that thou hast clung (so tenaciously) to (this earthly) life, O rat?"[1]

Death is thus, in the eyes of Rūmi, not extinction but the beginning of a new form of existence. He holds that the death, instead of being hateful, is an occasion of joy for the faithful

"I have tried it my death is (consists) in life· when I escape from this life 'tis to endure for ever"[2]

Death is quite different for those who are spiritually enlightened from what it is for others Those who are illuminated welcome death as a bounty from the Lord, for they regard it as a stepping-stone to further elevation of their spirit

"Hūd drew a line round the believers· the wind would become soft (subside) when it reached that place,

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, pp 49-50 (Book V-789-91 and 796-97)
2 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 215 (Book III-3838)

> Even so, to those who know God (*ʿārifān*) the wind of Death is soft and pleasant as the breeze (that wafts the scent) of (loved) ones like Joseph."[1]

Free-will and Necessitarianism:

This has been one of the most hotly-contested issues of dialectics One school of the dialecticians denied "Free Will" and held that man was helpless before the preordained and immutable decree of the Creator The people subscribing to this view were known by the name of *Jabriah* or Necessitarians. Rūmi poses the question: If man has been made so helpless, why has he been enjoined to perform certain actions and refrain from others? Why was the *Sharīʿah* promulgated for him? "Has anybody heard," asks Rūmi, "someone giving a command to the stones?"

> "He (the Necessitarian) says that commanding and forbidding are naught and that there is no power of choice All this (doctrine) is erroneous.
>
> The entire *Qurʾān* consists of commands and prohibitions and threats (of punishment): who (ever) saw commands given to a marble rock?"[2]

Rūmi says that free-will is ingrained in the nature of man who demonstrates it by his everyday actions. If a piece of timber falls on somebody from the roof, he is never angry with it nor does he seek vengeance from the flood or the wind from which he suffers a loss. This is so because he knows that these things do not possess a will of their own But the same man seeks retribution against another man—because he is aware that man is the master of his actions

> "If a piece of timber break off from your house-roof and fall upon you and wound you severely,
>
> Will you feel any anger against the timber of the roof? Will you ever devote yourself to taking vengeance upon it,

1. *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 48 (Book I-854 and 860).
2. *Ibid*, Vol VI, pp 181-82 (Book V-3019 and 3026)

(And say), 'why did it hit me and fracture my hand? It has been my mortal foe and enemy?'

And (in the case of) a man who visits your wife, a hundred thousand angers shoot up from you.

(On the contrary), if a flood come and sweep away your house-hold goods, will your reason bear any enmity towards the flood?

And if the wind came and carried off your turban, when did your heart show any anger against the wind?

The anger within you is a clear demonstration of (the existence of) a power of choice (in Man), so that you must not excuse yourself after the fashion of Necessitarians"[1]

Rūmi goes a step further and claims that even animals are aware whether a certain being possesses free will or not He draws this conclusion from the behaviour of pets like dogs and camels who sometimes retaliate against the man hitting them but not against the stick or the stone with which they are struck

"If a camel-driver goes on striking a camel, the camel will attack the striker

The camel's anger is not (directed) against his stick: therefore the camel has got some notion of the power of choice (in Man).

Similarly a dog, if you throw a stone at him, will rush at you and become contorted (with fury).

Since the animal intelligence is conscious of the power of choice (in Man), do not thou, O human intelligence, hold this (Necessitarian doctrine) Be ashamed!

This (power of choice) is manifest, but in his desire for the meal taken before dawn[2] that (greedy) eater shuts his eyes to the light

Since all his desire is for eating bread, he sets his face

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1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 183 (Book V-3041-43 and 3046-49)

2 The last permissible meal during the time between sunset and dawn in the month of Ramadhan, when the Muslims fast from dawn to sunset

towards the darkness, saying, 'It is not (yet) day.'"[1]

Causation:

Divergent views were held by different factions of the then Muslims about the cause and effect. The view held by the philosophers was that the phenomenal world is governed by a sequence of cause and effect and, therefore, there is a permanent and essential correlation between the two; the effect proceeds from its cause in the same way as the cause is immanent in the effect. The Muᶜtazilites too generally subscribed to the same view and held that since the effect was an inevitable outcome of the cause, there was hardly any possibility of any change in it. As a natural consequence, they denied miracles and viewed the effect proceeding without a cause as a 'breach of custom' which was an impossibility. The Ashᶜarites, on the other hand, subscribed to a view diametrically opposed to the Muᶜtazilites and did not recognise any cause whatsoever for an effect to follow it. All causes were, in their view, of only secondary importance in determining the production or non-production of the effects. Similarly, their view was that no substance has any property whatsoever, all causes and substances were merely instruments for manifesting the effects and accidents in accordance with the will of God. The divergent views held by the different sections of the Muslim community were also proving harmful inasmuch as these were employed by the free-thinkers and libertarians to accept or reject whatever they liked or disliked according to their wishes and sweet-will.

The view propounded by Rūmi in this regard is a middle path between the two extremes of the Muᶜtazilites and the Ashᶜarites. He recognises causation and accepts that there is a sequence of cause and effect in this phenomenal world which cannot be denied. He says that God has appointed effect to proceed from the cause just as He has made the properties immanent in the substances. At the same time, miracles are possible and

1. *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, pp. 183-184 (Book V, 3050-52 and 3054-56)

these have also been worked by men of God from time to time,

> "Most happenings come to pass according to the (customary) law, (but) sometimes the (Divine) Power breaks the law
>
> He hath established a goodly law and custom ; then He hath made the (evidentiary) miracle a breach of the custom
>
> If honour does not reach us without a (mediating) cause, (yet) the (Divine) Power is not remote from the removal of the cause "[1]

Normally the people see the cause and erroneously consider it to be the real agent They are helpless for they cannot draw any other conclusion from what they have been made to witness in this phenomenal world

> "In short, thou are entangled in the cause,
> But there is an excuse, for thou knowest it not."[2]

Rūmi says that the causation is decidedly a fact but the "Cause of all causes" is still a greater reality. He is the only Real Agent, Creator of all causes and Omnipotent Lord, and, therefore, it does not behove man to recognise the phenomenal causes and forget the First Cause.

> "O thou who art caught by the cause, do not fly outside (of causation) ; but (at the same time) do not suppose the removal of the Causer
>
> The Causer brings (into existence) whatsoever He will · the Absolute Power tears up (destroys) the causes "[3]

Rūmi repeatedly stresses the fact that the causes of effects we ordinarily come to know are those which are capable of being perceived through our senses. In addition to these external causes there are some others too which are latent and hidden from our view. The causes known to us are immanent in the hidden ones in the same way as the effect proceeds from its evident cause The hidden cause is thus an instrument for using the manifest cause in

1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 94 (Book V-1544-46)
2 *Mathnawi Molvi Ma'nwi*, p 261
3 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 94 (Book V-1547-48)

accordance with the Will of God which is really the Prime Mover and the Real Cause behind every incident.

> "If you strike stone on iron, it (the fire) leaps out, 'tis by God's command that it puts forth its foot.
>
> The stone and the iron are indeed causes, but look higher, O good man!
>
> For this (external) cause was produced by that (spiritual) cause. when did a cause ever proceed from itself without a cause?
>
> That (spiritual) cause makes this (external) cause operative, sometimes, again, it makes it fruitless and ineffectual."[1]

Just as we perceive the external causes, the prophets are able to see the latent causes.

> "And those causes which guide the prophets on their way are higher than these (external) causes.
>
> (Ordinary) minds are familiar with this (external) cause, but the prophets are familiar with those (spiritual) causes."[2]

The external causes are merely secondary and dependent on the latent or spiritual causes.

> "Over the (secondary) causes there are other (primary) causes: do not look at the (secondary) cause, let thy gaze fall on that (primary cause)."[3]

And, again he stresses the superiority of latent causes to the external ones:

> "These causes are (linked together) like the physician and the sick these causes are like the lamp and the wick
>
> Twist a new wick for your night-lamp (but) know that the lamp of the sun transcends these things."[4]

The prophets are sent by God at a time when the entire community has accepted the external causes as the real and ultimate

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1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol II, p 47 (Book I, 840,842-43 and 845)

2 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 47 (Book I-844 and 846)

3 *Ibid*, Vol IV, p, 141 (Book III-2516)

4 *Ibid*, Vol II, p 316 (Book II-1845-46)

ones, and discarded the Creator of all causes In other words, people become materialists or pagans by rejecting the Ultimate Cause or associating external causes with Him The prophets have, therefore, to strike at the root of this slavery to the external causes and call attention to the Creator of all causes and effects. This is also the reason why the prophets are allowed to work miracles, for, God wants to demonstrate through them that every incident depends entirely on His Will, whether the ordinary sequence of cause and effect is maintained or not.

> "The prophets came in order to cut (the cords of secondary) causes. they flung their miracles at Saturn (in the Seventh Heaven)
>
> Without cause (means) they clove the sea asunder, without sowing they found heaps of corn
>
> Sand, too, was turned into flour by their work; goat's hair became silk as it was pulled (from the hide).
>
> The whole of the *Qur'ān* consists in (is concerned with) the cutting off of (secondary) causes (its theme is) the glory of the poor (prophet or saint) and the destruction of (those like) Abū Lahab"[1]

Still, the sequence of cause and effect is the ordinary law or the way of God prescribed for the phenomenal world. It is intended to create an urge in man for making effort and striving to achieve his ends

> "But, for the most part, He lets the execution (of His will) follow the course of causation, in order that a seeker may be able to pursue the object of his desire."[2]

These are some of the examples how Rūmi solved those problems of philosophy and religion and elucidated the tenets and doctrines of the Faith which had been turned into a spell of ideas and thoughts by the wordy wrangling of the Mu'tazilites and Ash'arites Rumi turned these dry as dust philosophical discourses

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1 *The Mathnawi*, Vol IV, p 141 (Book III, 2517-20) (Abū Lahab was an uncle of the Prophet and his most bitter enemy)

2 *The Mathnawi*, Vol VI, p 94 (Book V, 1549)

into lively and interesting issues and illustrated them by means of anecdotes, fables and parables He thus made the problems clear enough for his readers to grasp the truth underlying these intricate questions

Rank and Worth of the Mathnawi :

The Mathnawi is one of the greatest mystical poems which has left a lasting and indelible mark on the thought and literature of the Islamic world. It would be no exaggeration to claim that there is hardly any other literary composition which has so influenced the Muslim peoples, and that too, for such a long time The intellectual and literary circles have been drawing inspiration from the Mathnawi for the past six hundred years In poetic merit and originality of ideas, in sublimity of thoughts and intensity of feelings, in the raptures of love and ecstasy, the Mathnawi has proved to be an unexcelled literary composition It is an inexhaustible treasure, ever shedding its brilliance and bringing to light new ideas and thoughts, styles and dictions. The dialecticians and doctors of religion have ever since been drawing upon the Mathnawi to solve the problems of dialectics through its direct and easily understandable method of solving these issues The examples and anecdotes through which Rūmi has solved these problems can still satisfy the critical minds of the intelligent youths who do not want to be driven into a common groove. Most of all, the Mathnawi enjoys to this day the widest popularity as a manual of guidance for those who want to be infused with a fervour of Divine love, passionate devotion and spiritual enthusiasm by gaining access to the mystical subtleties of beatific visions and illuminations, and the esoteric meanings of the Path, Love, Yearning and Union

No work of the nature, as the Mathnawi is, can be free from faults or can remain beyond criticism. It has not been unoften that the misguided mystics have taken advantage of Rumi's views, or the people with a pantheistic bent of mind have employed certain quasi-erotic expressions used in the Mathnawi for the defence of existentialist monism. The Mathnawi is, after all, a

literary composition by a human being who was neither infallible nor in a position to avoid his intuitional knowledge and spiritual illumination being influenced to some extent by his own propensities and inclinations of mind and extraneous impressions Despite these human failings, the Mathnawi excels the literary and poetic works on the subject in its boldness of approach, variety of ideas and wealth of expression It is indeed a living example of the intellectual superiority and immortality of Islam, establishing beyond doubt that Islam is always capable of breathing new life into in its adherents. It is no mean achievement of Rūmi that the Mathnawi pulled out the thinkers and litterateurs of his time from the intellectual stupor into which they had fallen and revitalised them with a ferment of literary endeavour

The Mathnawi has yet another achievement to its credit—and that belongs to the recent times When materialism began to make inroads into the world of Islam for the second time during the twentieth century under the cover of western thought, science and philosophy, producing a scepticism and an inclination to disbelieve everything beyond the ken of senses, and the old Islamic scholasticism failed to cope with the situation, the Mathnawi of Maulana-i-Rum was again able to withstand the intellectual onslaught of the victorious and advancing materialistic West, which would have indeed been no less disastrous than its political domination. It again lit the flame of faith in revelation and the revealed truths, filling the hearts with the reverence for the prophets, and inculcating belief in the reality and the unlimited possibilities of the spiritual and the unseen world. It brought back to the citadel of Islam innumerable souls which had been waylaid by the materialistic view of the life and the world, so forcefully propounded by the West Quite a large number of western educated Muslims, especially in the Indian subcontinent, have acknowledged the debt they owe to the Mathnawi in rediscovering the true content of the faith. The greatest Muslim thinker and philosopher of the present era, Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbāl has repeatedly owned with gratitude that he has imbided the inspiration of faith and love, inner warmth of spirit and the

effervescent dynamism of action from the Mathnawi of his spiritual mentor, Jalal ud-din Rumi

"A man of penetrating insight, Rūmi, my mentor,
The caravan enchanted with love got in him a path-finder
He has an abode higher than the sun and moon,
Of the milky way he makes his canopy's string.
With the light of the Qur'ān his bosom radiates,
His mirror (of heart) puts the cup of Jamshed[1] to shame.
Rejoicing notes of that musician, pure of heart,
Within my bosom make a tumult start."[2]

At another place, Iqbāl says·

"A guide to the path of rapturous love, Rūmi indites,
Songs, which are a nectar for those dying of thirst."[3]

But, as Iqbāl complains, instead of taking to heart the gift of Rūmi—his lofty idealism, his intuitive certitude and the glow of rapturous love—a section has been using his verses simply for musical recitals and whirling frenzy

"They dilated upon his works but cared not to understand at all,
The content of his words eluded these fellows like a ghazāl[4]
Nothing they learnt save the chant and whirl,
And shut their eyes to the dance of soul"[5]

This was, however, not the fault of Mathnawi which can still be a lodestar to the present materialistic age which is repining for the true and ardent love

"Thy heart not burns, nor is chaste thy glance,
Why wonder, then, if thou art not bold

1 Alludes to the legendry cup of the Iranian emperor Jamshed in which future events could be seen

2 *Mathnawi*, '*Pas Che Bayed Kard*', p 5

3 *Javed Nāma*, p 44

4 A dear i e a sweetheart with beautiful eyes

5 *Javed Nāma*, p 245

The eyes that see by the light of the West,
Without a bead of tear, crafty and vile they are."[1]

Iqbāl is confident that the Mathnawi of Rūmi can still awaken the soul from its slumber of heedlessness Therefore, his message to the youth of today is

"Have Rūmi as thy guide and spiritual mentor,
Thy heart shall be filled, God-willing, with a mighty fervour.
Rūmi can cleave the kernel from its shell,
Since implanted firmly is his foot in the path of love "[2]

1 *Bal-i-Jibreel*, p 52

2 *Javed Nāma*, pp 244-45

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

A. H	*A D*	*Events and Personalities*
21-110	642-728	Hasan al-Basri
61 (10th Muharram)	680 (10th October)	Massacre of Husain ibn ʿAli
61-101	681-720	ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAziz
73	692	ʿAbdullah bin Zubair (d.)
80-150	699-767	Abū Hanīfa, an-Nuʿmān
94-179	713-795	Mālik ibn Anas, Imām
99-101	717-720	Reign of ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz
122	739	Rising of Zaid ibn ʿAlī bin Husain against Caliph Hishām
124	741	Ibn Shahāb Zuhri (d.)
144	761	Execution of Ibn al-Muqanaʿ
145 (15th of Ramadhan)	762 (7th December)	Execution of Muhammad Zun-Nafs-us-Zakīya
145 (24th of Zul-Qaʿada)	763 (14th February)	Death of Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdullah
150	767	Ibn Juraih Makki (d.)
150-204	767-820	Ash Shafeʿi, Imām Muhammad ibn Idrīs
151	768	Ibn Ish'āq (d.)
153	770	Maʿmar Yamni (d.)
156	773	Saʿeed ibn abi-ʿArūba Madni (d.)
160	776	Rabiʿe ibn Sabīh (d.)
164-241	780-855	Hanbal, Imām Ahmad ibn
182	798	Haitham ibn Bashīr (d.)
187	803	Ahmad ibn Hanbal's first meeting with Ash-Shafeʿī
194-256	810-870	Al-Bukhāri, Abū ʿAbdullah Muhammad ibn Ismaʿīl
204	819	Ahmad ibn Hanbal began teaching of Tradition
204-261	819-874	Muslim, Abdul Husain
218	833	Caliph al-Mamūn's edict in regard to the creation of Qur'ān

A H.	A D	*Events and Personalities*
218-227	833-842	Reign of Caliph al-Muᶜtasim
232-247	847-861	Reign of Caliph al-Mutawakkil
258	871	Al-Kindi, Abū Yūsuf Yaᶜqūb (d.)
260-324	873 935	Al-Ashᶜari, Abul Hasan ᶜAli
273	886	Abū ᶜAbdullah ibn Mājah (d.)
275	888	Abū Daūd Sajistani (d.)
286	899	Abū Saᶜeed al-Janābī (d.)
299-567	911-1171	Fatimide Caliphate
303	816	Abū ᶜAbdur Rahman an-Nasā'i (d.)
309	921	Execution of Hallāj
311	923	Abū Bakr Khallal (d.)
331	943	Tahāwi (d.)
332	944	al-Maturīdi, Abū Mansūr (d.)
339	950	al-Farābi, Abū Nasr Muhammad (d.)
362	973	Islamic law of inheritance changed by the Fatimides
372	983	*Tarāwīh* disallowed by the Fatimides
393	1003	Punishment for offering *Salat-uz-Zuha*
395	1005	Water-cress and marsh-mellow prohibited by Fatimides
403	1013	Baqillāni, Abū Bakr (d.)
411	1020	Wine declared lawful by the Fatimides
418	1927	Asfara'inī, Abū Is'hāq (d.)
424	1033	People made to postrate before the Fatimide Caliph
428	1037	Ibn Sīna, Abū ᶜAli Hasan (d.)
448	1057	Salat ur-Raghaib comes into vague
450-505	1058-1111	Al-Ghazali, Abū Hamid ibn Muhammad
470-561	1077-1166	ᶜAbdul Qādir Jilāni
471	1079	al-Jurjāni, ᶜAbdul Qāhir (d.)
476	1083	Shirāzi, Abū Is'hāq (d.)
477	1084	Sheikh Abū ᶜAli al-Fārmadi (d.)
478	1085	Imam ul-Harmayn Abul Maᶜali Abul Malik Juwa'ini (d.)
484	1091	Al-Ghazali's arrival in Baghdad
485	1092	Al-Ghazali's appointment as ambassador in the court of Turkhān Khatoon

A H	*A D*	*Events and Personalities*
487-512	1094-1118	Reign of Abul ʿAbbās, Mustazhir b' Illāh
488	1095	ʿAbdur Qādir Jīlani's arrival in Baghdad
488	1095	Al-Ghazali leaves Baghdad
490	1097	First Crusade
492	1099	Fall of Jerusalem
499	1106	Al-Ghazali returned to teaching in Nishapur University
500	1107	Fakhr ul-Mulk killed
501	1108	ʿAli ibn Yūsuf ibn Tashfīn's order to destroy copies of *Ihyāʾ ʿUlūm-id-Dīn*
502	1109	Tabrezi, Abū Zakaria
504	1110	Al-Ghazali returns to Tūs
508-597	1114-1201	Ibn al-Jawzi, ʿAbdur Rahmān
511	1117	Cadi Abū Saʿeed Makhrami
512-529	1118-1135	Al-Mustarshid b' Illāh, the Caliph
513	1119	Ibn ʿAqeel, Abul Wafā (d.)
516	1122	al-Harīri, Abul Qāsim (d)
525	1131	al-Dabbās, Sheikh Abul Khair Mammad ibn Muslim (d)
529	1135	Caliph al-Mustarshid defeated by Sultan Masʿūd
529	1135	al-Rāshid b' Illāh (deposed)
530-555	1136-1160	al-Muktafi l' Amr Illāh
539 (6th Jamādi ul-Akhir)	1144 (5th December)	Capture of Edessa (Roha)
540	1145	ʿAbdul Momin succeeds Tashfīn ibn ʿAli ibn Tashfīn in Spain
541 (5th Rabi ul-Thāni)	1146 (14th Septeber)	Murder of ʿImad ud-dīn Zengi
543-628	1148-1231	Bahaʾ ud-dīn Veled, Muhammad
555-565	1160-1170	al-Mustanjid b'Illāh
558	1163	Defeat of Nūr ud-dīn Zengī at Hisn al-Akrād
559	1164	Capture of Hārim by Nur ud-dīn Zengi
569 (11th Shawwal)	1174 (15th May)	Death of Nur ud-dīn Zengi
575-622	1179-1225	Reign of an-Nāsir li Dīn-Illāh

A. H	*A. D*	*Events and Personalities*
578-660	1182-1262	ʿIzz ud-dīn ibn ʿAbdul-Salām
583 (24th Rabi ul-Akhir)	1187 (4th July)	Battle of Hittīn (Tiberias)
583 (27th Rajab)	1187 (2nd October)	Salah ud-dīn's entry in Jerusalem
588	1192	Peace concluded after Third Crusade
589 (27th Safar)	1193 (4th March)	Death of Salah ud-dīn Ayyubi
591	1195	Establishment of colleges in Haleb
593-632	1197-1235	Suharwardi, Shahab ud-dīn
595	1198	Ibn Rushd, (Averroes) Abū Walī Muhammad (d.)
557-624	1162-1227	Chenghiz Khan
596-617	1199-1220	Reign of ʿAlāʾ ud-dīn Muhammad Khwarism Shah
597	1201	Famine in Egypt
597	1201	Earthquack in Syria, Iraq, etc.
601	1205	Battles between Qatādah Husami and Sālim Husami
602	1206	Chenghiz Khan elected Kakhan
603	1206-7	War between Ghorids and Khwarism Shah
604	1207	Crusaders attack Syria
604 (6th Rabi ul-Awwal)	1207 (30th September)	Birth of Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmi
606	1209	Rāzi Fakhr ud-dīn (d.)
607	1210	Conspiracy between the Crusaders and the rulers of Jazirah
610	1213	Bahāʾ ud-dīn Veled leaves Balkh
616	1218	Chenghiz Khan attacks the kingdom of Khwarism Shah
616	1219	Crusaders capture Damietta
622	1225	Birth of Chelebi Husām ud-dīn
623-640	1226-1242	Reign of Mustansir b'Illāh
624	1227	Death of Khwarism Shah
626	1229	Battles between Ayyubid Princes
626-639	1229-1241	Reign of Ogotay
628	1231	Death of Bahaʾ ud-dīn Veled
630	1233	Rūmī's journey to Damascus
635	1238	Rūmi returns to Konya
637	1239	Burhān ud-dīn (d.)
638	1240	Ibn ʿArabi, Mohi ud-dīn (d.)

A H	*A D*	*Events and Personalities*
639	1241	Conversion of Khan Ananda
640-643	1242-1245	No covering sent for K'aba by the Caliph
640-644	1242-1246	Royal processions on the occasion of ʿId
640-656	1242-1258	Reign of al-Muʿtasim b'Illāh
642	1244	Ibn ʿAlqami appointed as the Prime Minister of Abbasid Caliphate
642 (26th Jamādi ul-Ākhir)	1244 (29th November)	Shams ud-dīn Tebrez arrives in Konya
643 (1st Shawwal)	1246 (20th February)	Shams ud-dīn Tebrez leaves Konya
644-646	1246-1248	Reign of Kuyuk
645	1247	Jalāl ud-dīn Rūmi turns to musical recitations
647	1249	Sheikh Salah ud-dīn the gold-beater appointed as Chief assistant by Rūmi
654-665	1256-1267	Reign of Barāka Khan
655	1257	Shiʿa-Sunni Riots in Baghdad
656	1258	Halaku sacks Baghdad
657	1259	Sheikh Salāh ud-dīn (d)
658	1260	Fall of Damascus
658 (25th of Ramadhan)	1260 (3rd September)	Battle of ʿAin Jalūt
659	1261	Revival of ʿAbbasid Caliphate
664-669	1266-1270	Reign of Burāq Khan (Ghyas ud-dīn)
672 (5th Jamādi-ul-Ākhir)	1273 (17th December)	Death of Jalāl ud-din Rūmi
683	1284	Rising against Takudar Khan
683-690	1284-1291	Reign of Arghun
694	1295	Conversion of Ghazān, the seventh Ilkhān
703	1304	Uljaytu (Muhammad Khudabandah) succeeds Ghazān
722-730	1322-1330	Reign of Tarmashirīn Khan
723-728	1323-1328	Reign of Timūr Khan
726	1326	Conversion of Tarmashirīn Khan
748-764	1347-63	Reign of Tuqlūq Timūr Khan
806	1403	Hafiz Zain ud-din al-ʿIraqi (d)

Ahl-i-Bait.—*Lit* the people of the house of the Prophet, with reference to Qur'ān XXXIII-33 The Shi'aites, however, attribute the expression to 'Ali, Fatima, their sons and dependents to whom they restrict their appellation as well as the right to spiritual merit and political rule

Allah—has been used throughout in this book in the translation of the Holy Qur'ān, taken from Marmaduke Pickthall's *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'ān* As Pickhtall says he has retained the word Allah because there is no corresponding word in English The word *Allah* (the stress is on the last syllable) has neither feminine nor plural and has never been applied to anything other than the unimaginable Supreme Being

Amīr-ul-Muminīn—*Lit* The commander of the Faithful A title which was first given to the second Caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb and afterwards assumed by his successors

Asmā' ar-Rijāl.—*Lit* "The names of Men" A dictionary of biography, specially of those who handed down the Traditions of the Prophet

Ba'it—Oath of allegiance taken by the people for remaining faithful to the head of a Muslim State or any other person acknowledged as a spiritual guide

Bait ul-Māl—*Lit* 'The House of Property' The public treasury of a Islamic State, which the ruler is not allowed to use for his personel expenses, but only for the public good

Batiniyah.—*Lit* "inner, esoteric" They maintained that only a symbolic interpretation requiring gradual initiation by an illuminated teacher could reveal the real meanings of the Qur'ān The word they claimed, was like a veil, hiding the deep and occult meaning never attainable to those clinging to literal explanation Being a Shi'aite theological school of thought, they also upheld the doctrine of the divine source of the *Imāmat* (the spiritual leadership of Imām) and of the transmission by divinely ordained hereditary succession from the Caliph 'Ali The wide-spread Isma'ilite sect and its offsprings (Qarmatians Fatimides Assassins, etc) belong to the sphere of Batinite thought

Cadi.—The judge and the administrator of law appointed by the ruler of a Muslim State

Dīn.—The Arabic word for 'religion" Although sometimes used for an idolatrous religion, it is used specially for the religion of the prophets and their revealed scriptures

Dīn-i-Ilāhi.—Jalāl ud-din Muhammad Akbar, the great Mogul Emperor, had initiated a new religion entitled as *Dīn-i-Ilāhi* with the sole purpose of producing an amalgam of Hindu and Muslim faiths in order to strengthen and consolidate the Mogul empire People who embraced this faith had openly to forsake the conformist or orthodox Islam which, according to Akbar, had outlived its utility after a thousand years since its inception Although the new

religion claimed to embody the merits of all the religions without any prejudice, it favoured Hinduism and freely rejected or subjected to amendments the Islamic injunctions which were held to be retrogressive

Dinar.—A gold coin of the weight of ninety-six barley grains

Dirham.—A silver coin

Dozakh or Hell.—(also *Jahannum*) is the place of torment to which the sinners will be consigned on the Day of Judgement

Fardh.—That which is obligatory A term used for those rules and ordinances of religion which are said to have been established and enjoined by God Himself, as distinguished from those which are established on the precept or practice of the Prophet, and which are called *Sunnah*

Fardh-i-Kafāyah.—A command which is imperative upon all Muslims, but which if one person in a group performs it, it is sufficient or equivalent to all having performed it

Fatimides.—A Shiaʿite dynasty of 13 Caliphs or *Imāms* in North-Africa (911-1171) and in Egypt (after 969) Unlike the other heads of the larger or smaller states emerging within the sphere of the ʿAbbasid Caliphate or which conceded to the Caliph, at least to save appearance, the Fatimides challenged the ʿAbbasids for both the temporal and spiritual power Beyond its political significance, however, it fulfilled the apocalyptic belief in the reign of Mahdi, an essential tenet of the Ismaʿilite branch of Shiaʿism Following were the Fatimide Caliphs

1 * al-Mahdi ʿUbayd-Ullāh (911-934)
2 al-Qāʾim (934-946)
3 al-Manṣūr (946-952)
4 al-Muʿizz (952-975)
5 al-ʿAzīz (975-996)
6 al-Hakīm (996-1021)
7 al-Zāhir (1021-1035)
8 al-Mustansir (1035-1094)
9 al-Mustaʿli (1094-1101)
10 al-Āmir (1101-1130)
11 al-Hāfiz (1130-1149)
12 al-Zāfir (1149-1154)
13 al-Fāʾiz (1154-1160)
14 al-ʿĀḍid (1160-1171)

Fatwa.—A formal answer to a question on Islamic law, submitted by a judge, an official body or also by private people to a doctor of religion The findings given as an answer to such questions are based on the Qurʾān and the Prophet's Tradition (*hadith*), on *ijmāʿ* (consensus of opinion) and *qiyās* (sound deductive reasoning)

Fiqah.—The dogmatic theology of Islam, specially that pertaining to jurisprudence

Hadith.—*See* Sunnah

Hajj.—*Lit* "setting out", or "tending towards" The pilgrimage to Mecca performed in the month of *Zil-Hijjah*, or the twelfth month of the Islamic year, is the fifth pillar of Islam, and an incumbent religious duty for those who can afford the expenses It is founded upon express injunctions in

the Qur'ān

Hajr-i-Aswad.—*Lit* "Black Stone" At the north-east corner of the K'aba, near the door, is studded the famous black stone, at four or five feet above the ground Its colour is deep reddish brown, approaching to black Being kissed by the faithful after circumambulation of the K'aba, the *Hajr-i-Aswad* has been worn out to its present surface by the millions of touches and kisses it has received

Halāl—*Lit* "That which is untied or loose" That which is lawful, as distinguished from *harām*, or that which is unlawful

Harām.—*Lit* "prohibited" or that which is unlawful The word is used in both a good and a bad sense, e g *Bait ul-Harām*, the sacred house, and *Mal ul-Harām*, unlawful possession

A thing is said to be *harām* when it is forbidden, as opposed to that which is *halāl*, or lawful

Hijrah.—*Lit* "migration" The date of the Prophet Muhammad's departure from Mecca was the fourth day of Rabi'ul-Awwal (20th June, 622 A D) The *Hijrah* was instituted by Caliph 'Umar to refer events as happening before or after it, thus beginning the Islamic Calendar from the year of *Hijrah*

Hikmat—*Lit* "The Wisdom". The term is used to express the knowledge revealed in the Qur'ān

'Id.—The two Muslim feasts are *'Id al-Adh'ha* or the Feast of Sacrifice and *'Id ul-Fitr* or the Feast of Fast-Breaking at the end of the month of Ramadhan The former is held on the 10th of *Zil-Hijjah* which concludes the rituals of *Hajj*

Ijtihad.—*Lit* "Exertion" The logical deduction on a legal or theological question by a learned and enlightened doctor of religion, as distinguished from *Ijma'*, which is the collective opinion of a number of jurisprudents

'Ilm.—*see* 'Ulema

Imām—"One who leads", a normal guide or a model It commonly denotes in the Sunnite creed the leader of the congregation in prayer, who should be conversant with the ritual In the Shi'ah doctrine, however, the term covers an entirely different notion To them the *Imām* is the faultless and and infallible leader, an offspring of 'Ali, to whom spiritual leadership is supposed to have been passed on from the Prophet through his son-in-law and the fourth Caliph 'Ali

Islam—*Lit* "The Surrender" to Allah i e the religion which the Probhet had established, with complete submission to the will of God, as its cardinal principle

Isma'ilites.—Or seveners (*Sib'iyah*) was a group of extremist Shi'ahs, originating from a schism which took place in the Shi'ah community towards the end of the eighth century about the question of the succession of the seventh

Imām, Ismā'il The sixth *Imām*, Ja'far al-Sādiq, had disinherited Ismā'il in favour of his younger son Mūsa al-Kāzim but a faction of the Shi'ahs remained faithful to Ismā'il Later, the Ismā'ilities proved their vitality under such different aspects as the terrorism of the Qarmātian sectaries, the caliphate of Fatimides, the Brethren of Purity and the once so dreaded Assassins (also *see* Batiniyah)

'Itizal.—*Lit* "Seceded", the word is applied to the school of Wāsil ibn 'Atā who broke away from Hasan al-Basri (Also see, *Mu'tazilah*)

Jabriyah—The sect denied free agency in man They take their denomination from *Jabr*, which signifies "necessity or compulsion", because they held man to be necessarily and inevitably constrained to act as he does by force of God's eternal and immutable decree They declared that reward and punishment are the effects of necessity and the same they said of the imposing of commands by a ruler

Jāhiliyah—(*Jahl*, Ignorance) or the Age of Ignorance is the name given to the period preceding Islam in Arabia It was mainly on account of the ignorance of religious truths and the materialistic way of life in the pre-Islamic times that the age was known as the Age of Ignorance The poetry of the *Jāhiliyah* period is generally considered as one of the greatest contribution to Arabic literature

Jahmiyah—A sect founded by Jahm ibn Safwān (717) He borrowed from the *Murji'ite* sect the doctrine that true faith is founded on conviction independently of external manifestations and from the *Mu'tazilites*, the rejection of all anthropomorphic attributes of God Unlike *Mu'tazilites*, *Jahmiyah* believed in absolute predestination, that man has neither power nor choice in deciding his actions Thus Jahm ibn Safwān was a precursor of *Jabriyah* (Determinists or Necessitarians) who survived until the XIth Century

Jannat or Paradise—Is the celestial abode of bliss to which the righteous will be sent on the Day of Judgment

Jazyah—Or poll-tax is levied, in an Islamic State, on those non-Muslims who choose to live as a citizen under it Such citizens of an Islamic State obtain security on the payment of poll-tax and are exempted from compulsory military duty to which Muslim citizen are liable

Jihād—*Lit* "An effort, or a striving" A religious war which is a duty extending to all times, against those who seek to destroy Islam or put hinderances in the way of religious observance

Ka'ba—*Lit* "The Cube' The most venerated sanctuary of Islam, situated in the centre of the Great Mosque of Mecca

Khatib—*Lit* The preacher of a sermon or oration delivered on Friday at the time of congregational prayer on that day The *Khutba* is also recited on the two festivals of *'Id ul-Fitr* and *'Id ul-Adh'ha*

Khilafat-i-Rāshida—The expression is restricted to the rule of first four

successors of the Prophet who ruled over the community strictly in accordance with the tenets of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. These were, Abū Bakr, 11 A. H. (632 A. D.), ʿUmar, 13 A. H. (634 A. D.), ʿUthman, 23 A. H. (643 A. D.) and ʿAli, 35-40 A. H. (655-660 A. D.). Al-Hasan who succeeded ʿAli but later resigned in favour of Muaʿwiyah is also include by some among the right-guided caliphs.

Liʿān—Divorcing by mutual cursing of husband and wife.

Maʿād—or requital in the Hereafter is an article of Muslim faith. It calls for belief in the Day of Judgement, the Resurrection, man's presence in the Divine court, and the administration of reward and punishment in accordance with his faith and actions.

Mamlūk—*Lit.* "Slave", the designation of a caste formed by imported slaves serving in the army.

Masah—The touching of earth for purification where water is not available for ritual ablution.

Mala'ikah—*Lit.* "The Angels". The angels as created beings are only Divine messengers, faithful executors of the commands of God and have nothing of Godhead about them.

Maulana—*Lit.* "Lord", a honorific title used for religious scholars.

Millat—The word occurs in the Qur'ān several times for the religion of Abraham. Hence it stands for those who are the followers of a prophet.

Mujaddid—*One who revives and restores Islam.*

Muqām-i-Ibrāhīm—Lit. "The place or station of Abraham" adjacent to Kʿaba, within the boundry of the Holy Mosque, which contains the sacred stone upon which Abraham stood when he built the Kʿaba.

Muʿtazilah—*Lit.* "The separatists". A school of thought founded by Wāsil ibn ʿAtā', who separated from the school of Hasan al-Basri. The chief tenets of the school were: (1) They rejected all eternal attributes of God saying that eternity is the proper or formal attribute of His essence, that God knows by His essence, and not by His knowledge, that to affirm these attributes is the same thing as to make more eternals than one, and that the Unity of God is inconsistent with such an opinion. (2) They believed the word of God (Qur'ān) to have been created, and whatever was created is also an accident, and liable to perish. (3) They held that if any Muslim is guilty of grievous sin, and dies without repentance, he will be eternally damned. (4) They also denied all vision of God in Paradise by the corporeal eye, and rejected all comparisons or similitude applied to God.

During the reign of the ʿAbbasid Caliphs, al-Mamūn, al-Muʿtasim and al-Wāthiq (198-233 A. H.), the Muʿtazilah were in high favour.

Nabīd—An exhilarating but not intoxicating drink, prepared from barley.

Nabūwat—The office or work of a *nabi* or a prophet, who is directly

inspired by God and to whom a special mission has been entrusted.

Nifāq—*Lit* Hypocrisy A term applied by the Qur'ān (*munafiqīn*) for a class of people who in the days of the Prophet professed to follow him. It therefore applies to anyone who publicly professes to believe in Islam but hides infidelity in one's heart

Qadriyah—Ma'bad al-Juhaim (d 699 A D.) was the first to discuss the problem of the freedom of will He proclaimed that man held power (*qadr*) over his actions, and consequently, the tyrants and cruel kings and rulers were responsible for their unjust deeds They were the ancient *Mu'tazilites* before al-Wasil separated from the school of Hasan al-Basri

Qaramita—An extremely radical branch of the *Isma'ilite* group of the *Shi'ah* sect called after its founder Hamdān Qarmāt, in existence from the IXth until the middle of the XIth century Hamdān Qarmāt preached a crudely materialistic communism to the masses, a mystical agnosticism to a selected elite, and a hostile contempt for orthodox ethics to all Ruthless terrorism was proclaimed as the means to achieve ultimate happiness

Qur'ān—The sacred book of Islam which is believed to be the revealed word of God to the Prophet Muhammad. It differs from other religious scriptures in so far as they are believed to be mere Divine inspirations and not revealed word by word to their writers.

Rak'at—(pl Rak'ah) A unit of prayer consisting of two prostrations and one genuflection

Rami—The throwing of pebbles at the pillars, or Jumrah at Mecca, as a part of religious ceremony during the (*hajj*) pilgrimage

Ramadhan—Is the ninth month of Islamic year during which Muslims keep fast from dawn till sunset

Risālat—The office of an apostle or prophet As against *nabi* (prophet), the *rasūl* (apostle) is one to whom a special mission has been entrusted although a scripture may not have been revealed to him

Rozah or Saum—Means fasting It is one of the obligatory observances of Islam enjoined by the Qur'ān The thirty days fasting during the month of *Ramadhan* is regarded as a divine institution, and is therefore a compulsory observance for all excepting those who are not in a position to keep the fast from dawn till sunset

Sabaq—Giving precedence to certain rituals of *Hajj* which are to be performed after others

Sakharah or Qubbatus-Sakharah—To the north-west of the Dome of the Rock, a small but beautiful cupola on a raised platform houses the sacred rock which was used as the place for sacrificial offerings by Abraham and later prophets of Bani Israel

Salāt—Is the second of the five fundamental observances in Islam It is a devotional exercise which every Muslim is required to render to God five

times a day It is a duty frequently enjoined in the Qur'ān

Salat Ul-Zuha—A special but voluntary prayer performed halfway between the morning and mid-day prayers

Sharī'ah—The law, including both the teachings of the Qur'ān and of the Traditions (actions and sayings) of the Prophet

Sheikh—A title accorded to the venerable doctors of religion It is used in addressing theological scholars who have acquired a certain spiritual prominence, without necessarily holding a religious office

Shī'ah—*Lit* 'Split' and also 'followers'—a general designation covering various Islamic sects not following the conformist or orthodox faith The schism whose origin goes back to the early years of Islam had its beginnings in the rivalry for the caliphate between the Ummayyad and 'Alid clans after Caliph 'Ali's death and Mu'awiyah's (the first Ummayyad) accession to the caliphate The 'Alid partly maintained that this highest office of Islam was a prerogative of the Prophet's house They also maintained that 'Ali was the first legitimate *Imām* or successor to the Prophet and therefore rejected the first three successors of the Prophet The belief in this regard later developed into a faith that the Prophet's God-willed spiritual and secular guidance had passed from him to 'Ali who, himself an incarnation of the Divine Spirit, had bequeathed his mission to a sequence of hereditary *Imāms* of his progeny On this soil was set up a theological framework which left ample room for the most varied opinions, some of them hard on the borderline of Islam

Sūfī—One who professes the mystic principles for attaining the gnosis of God

Sunnah—As opposed to the Qur'ān which is a direct revelation from God, the Prophet also received what is regarded as *wahī ghair matlu'* or an unread revelation which enabled him to give authoritative declarations on religious questions The Arabic words used for these traditions are *Hadith* and *Sunnah* (a saying and a custom) The Prophet gave very special instructions respecting the faithful transmission of his sayings Gradually, however, spurious Traditions also gained currency for which an elaborate canon of subjective and and historical criticism was evolved for the reception or rejection of the Traditions

The *Sunnah* represents an authentic interpretation of the Qur'ān, a valuable source of law and an infallible guide for the overwhelming majority of Muslims in every situation of their spiritual and secular life as opposed to *Bid'ah* (innovation)

Sunnī—*Lit* 'One of the path' A term generally applied to the overwhelming majority of the Muslims who consider the *sunnah* of the Prophet, manifested by his sayings, acts or tacit approval and transmitted by the companions of the Prophet, as the infallible guide of the faithful and an authentic interpretation of the Qur'ān

abandonment to spiritual illumination and divine inspiration

Wājib—*Lit* 'That which is obligatory'. A term used in Islamic law for those injunctions, the non-observance of which constitutes sin, but the denial of which does not attain to downright infidelity.

Zakāt—*Lit* it means purification, whence it is used to express a portion of property bestowed in alms, as a sanctification of the remainder of the property. The institution is founded on the command in the Qur'ān (*vide* Surah *II* : 83), being one of the five obligatory observances enjoined for the believer The fixed amount of property and the rate of the poor-due, varies with reference to the different kinds of property in possession

Zihār—Husbands divorcing the wife by likening her to any kinswomen within the prohibited degree.

Zimmī—A non-Muslim subject of an Islamic state who, for the payment of a poll-tax or capitation-tax, enjoys security of his person and property and other civic rights

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THE END